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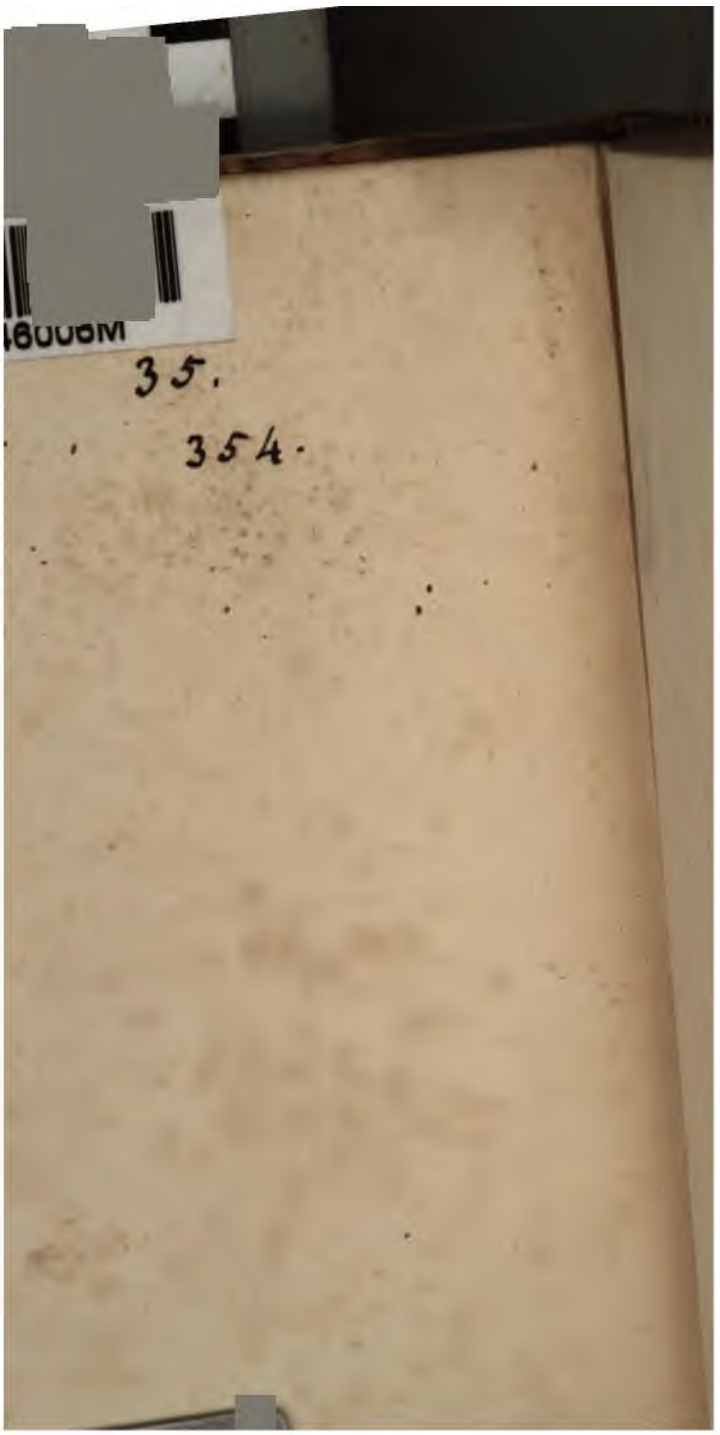
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THE

YOUNG QUEEN:

A TALE.

In that tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears.

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

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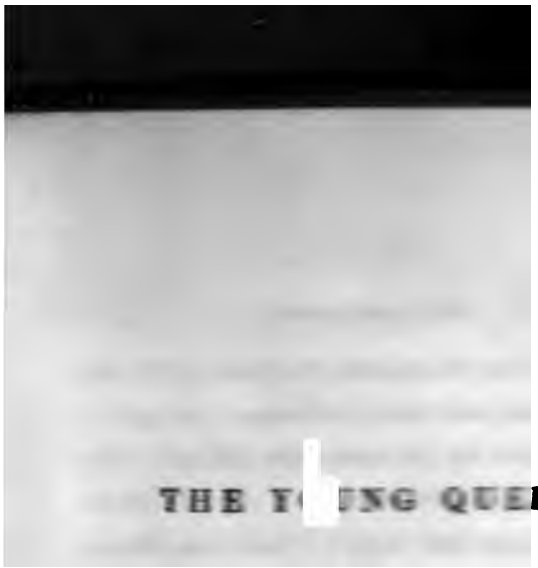
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354.







THE YOUNG QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

O, never was there queen so mightily attended

I do desire thee, even from a heart
As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,
To bear me company, and go with me.

On a heap of ferns and leaves wrapped in a horseman's cloak, lay a fair young girl. She slept, but not in peace. That face, made only for smiles and joy, now was pale, and showed that the anxiety of her waking hours was not forgotten in her dreams. There, where but late had written happiness, Mara, with impatient hand, had dashed it out, and deeply engraven sorrow. Her full lips were pressed firmly together, and her





THE YOUNG QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

O, never was there queen so mightily betray'd!

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As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,
To bear me company, and go with me.

SHAKSPEARE.

On a heap of ferns and leaves, wrapped in a horseman's cloak, lay a fair young girl. She slept, but not in peace. That face, made only for smiles and joy, now was pale, and showed that the anxiety of her waking hours was not forgotten in her dreams. There, where God had written happiness, Man, with impious hand, had dashed it out, and deeply engraven sorrow. Her full lips were pressed firmly together, and her

hands clenched fast against her cheeks, giving the idea that the soul within, although it struggled, was yet made up for some stern purpose. Her long brown tresses were tangled over a brow on which a crown had rested. There was nothing in her appearance royal—except, indeed, her troubled sleep!

Forlorn as was her situation now—night and darkness around her—the dripping rock her only shelter—the wild winds moaning aloud—yet there lay one on whom a nation had been content to rest its hopes of future happiness. Where were her courtiers now? Where the heads that should have counselled; the hands that should have shielded her? Did the subtle politician lay deep schemes for her deliverance, or the headlong warrior throw himself between her and danger? No! they had proved false to their honour and their oaths, their sovereign and their God—but for no fault of hers.

It is not my intention to give an account of the revolution which had thrown her of whom I write

into her present situation, for it is not in our day, when revolutions have become so common as to be getting quite vulgar, that such is necessary to make what I relate appear probable. And if not necessary for this purpose, what other motive could I have for dwelling on such a theme? Oh! I am so sick of man in the mass, that I love to fly off to individual excellence, and dwell upon it, to prevent my hating my fellow-creatures, instead of only laughing at them. I fly off to individual excellence, as to a high place whose top reaches above the malaria, the "reek of the rotten fen" of the world, and where alone safety from the infection, and health, can be found. It is a punishment to me to be obliged to state, that the Emperor her father, as much against his own inclination as against hers, had been persuaded to place the young queen at the head of the government of H——, a kingdom "united in division" to the empire; for the meaning of which phrase, if it be not understood, I must beg the reader to think of our own "Imerald Isle."

This kingdom had for its sins been smitten by worse than sword, or famine, or pestilence—by loss of reason. Discord cannot be said to have thrown into it any thing so clear as her torch; she had rather enveloped it in the most smouldering smoke that her fires could occasion. This had made those of "the movement" party blind to all the blessings they had enjoyed, and their opponents incapable of seeing those that were safely within their reach. Like wild horses yoked together, some plunged madly forward, and some hung obstinately back; and thus the car of state, which should have been borne onward in their pride and strength, was hurled to ruin. When

before high Heaven as make the angels weep."*

Should it be said, "Whatever passions might have opposed her, still it cannot be believed that men would aim at the life of a female who had never shown any but good intentions,"—I would fain bow to the correction, and own myself a libeller of my race, if I could do so; but, for my soul, I cannot. No! there is a name written in blood, and the scroll is placed on high, which Truth in her sternest attitude points to—a name which proves that nothing can enter the imagination too bad to find a prototype in history when once the villain passions have broken the restraint

* And is it thus alone that the altar of Liberty is approached — only by unbelievers or by drunken votaries? No! there are still many, in one land at least, who worship her in reason and in truth; still many who neither deny her being, nor give her up for the painted harlot that is like her, but whose very existence is in confusion and in blood. And in that land their name, whatever the "greasy rogues" may say, is Tory; whilst the name of the "chief beast" that fighteth against them is Radical.

of laws—one of the very deepest dyed of many "damned spots" that will not "out" from the record of human actions—it is "Elizabeth of France." Innocence and Virtue are wreathed around it, Pity weepeth beneath it, Heaven smileth upon it,—and shall it not be avenged?

And thus was one, beautiful as young, good as high-born, another "Elizabeth," driven forth to wander with the "things of night." Can we wonder when she was forced to meet the rough blasts of Heaven, houseless, flying, and ill-protected, or abide a still sterner fate, that even from her young soul should be wrung that bitter saying, "Oh, I would trust their mercies rather than those of men?" But herein her sense of injury had made her murmur too loudly against her fate, for she still had some on whom she could repose. Even here below, her heart had



but only one such was near her now, and that one but newly found and valued.

Leaning his back against the rock at whose foot lay the once "Bright young Queen," with one hand tightening down the bottom of the cloak to keep her feet warm, and with the other holding up the cape to shelter her face from the wind, there sat a youth whom no prudent young lady would choose for her sole protector—except only as far as Gretna Green; that is, if prudent young ladies ever go there: but this young lady, although the most prudent in the world, I have already said, could not help doing so.

The youth, whom we must call Montfort, being a soldier, this was not the first time this "brave over-hanging canopy" (a marvellous uncomfortable one to sleep under) had been his only bed-curtains. He therefore knew, that if you cannot have both, it is better to do without a good bed than without a good pillow. For which reason he had taken off his coat, and so cautiously placed it under the sleeper's head, that she only

awoke sufficiently to mutter something, but n
to know what was taking place; so heavy we
the drowsy god upon her, from over-fatigue an
long watching.

For being thus exposed to the cold night air,
Montfort was amply repaid by seeing that the head
he had sought to ease, slept with apparently more
comfort,—fewer turnings and twistings and face-
makings being observable, than when her little
ear seemed nearly cut off by the hard stump she
had before been resting it on.

Although, for the most part, we easily confess
the faults of a friend, it is a sad thing to be
obliged, at starting, to acknowledge so many
things for my hero which I would not for the
world be thought guilty of myself; such as
"Loyalty," a thing quite exploded since the world
has been blessed in the French Revolution—
"Generosity," &c. &c. But I cannot waste time
in enumerating all his weaknesses, and, there-
fore, have thrown him on my readers' mercy by
et-cetera-ing them. Suffice it to say, he held the

silly idea, that misfortune should only draw him closer to those to whom he had once pledged his faith — a sentiment which we of the nineteenth century can hardly hear with common patience. And, moreover, he had not sense enough to distinguish, that although keeping faith with a fellow-subject may be overlooked, yet doing so to a sovereign, especially if in distress, is quite inexcusable.*

* With such confined ideas, how is my unfortunate hero ever to emulate the fame of a Ney?—for it is unquestionable that the "bravest of the brave" owes not his fame to being such, but to that one brilliant act of his life just before the closing of it, which, like the bursting of a meteor as it finishes its course, was so resplendent as to efface even the glories of his former track.

My hero threw away a still nobler opportunity, for he might not only have betrayed a royal person who trusted him, but also a woman, which surely would have redounded more to his credit; that is, if I don't forget the arguments of the liberals of that period, for I am pretty sure they went to the length, "that the greater the trust betrayed, the greater is the glory." And if, in the chances and changes of this mortal world, he should afterwards have happened to be hanged or shot for his conduct, then, indeed, would the seal have been set to his fame!—then, indeed, would his glory have

The only defence I can make for my hero is, that liberal principles were not so well understood in his day; and even if they had been, he might not have profited by it, for his education had been sadly neglected by an eccentric old father, who, instead of putting his own narrow notions in his head, should have taught him the ways of the world, and a little political* economy.

been yelled forth in such a cloud of pestiferous breath, that it would have gone down "*plombé*" to the latest posterity.

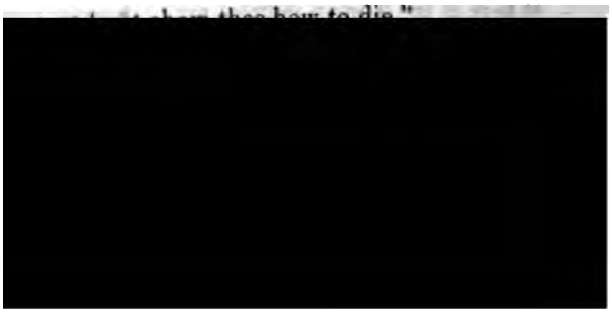
* I have an intention of writing a short essay on selfishness, (a very short one, it is supposed, will do,) in which I shall point out its manifold advantages over generosity, and prove how much more proper and statesman like it is, to make the former, rather than the latter, the governing principle; and shall endeavour, as far as lies in my power, to eradicate this foolish fancy, which, I grieve to say, does yet exist to some extent, even in this enlightened age. I have actually met with it,—more than once too.

My essay will be accompanied by a glossary, or, more properly speaking, a radically reformed dictionary, in which will be explained the true meaning of many other words that have been quite as much corrupted and misunderstood for ages as "Loyalty."

Having now made "a clean breast of it," and acknowledged that my hero is not the least bit of a modern hero, I may proceed to say that he had not exactly settled in his own mind whether he was a hero at all, or no. He had never had an opportunity of proving it, even to his own satisfaction. But, nevertheless, as he gazed at the helpless object before him, so calling for man's protection, he felt very heroic indeed. Nor is it wonderful that in such a situation high thoughts should have come into his mind. He gazed upon her agitated face as if he would have read her soul: but such was not his thought, for he knew it all. He knew, that she who was lying before him, looking a lily ready to bend to every blast, was resolved to yield up life rather than keep it and give up principle. And such, alas! would her hard choice be, if she fell into the power of their enemies. Then death! But, oh! who could bear to look upon that cheek, and think of death?

But although his situation was enough to excite

the most cold-blooded animal, (and his blood was always somewhat the reverse,) he did not feel the least inclination to rant and rave, and lay his sword at her feet, and talk about the last drop of his blood: yet, though no one saw him but the Being to whom the vow was made, there was a glow upon his cheek, a fire in his eyes, and a loftiness in his bearing as he muttered through his compressed lips, "If I forsake thee, in life or in death, may God forsake me! I have done evil deeds, which make me unworthy that this trust should be placed in my hands, but, now I am leagued with Heaven itself in protecting innocence, may I be an outcast from Heaven if I do not strive to deserve it! If I cannot save thee, I



the most cold-blooded animal, (and his blood was always somewhat the reverse,) he did not feel the least inclination to rant and rave, and lay his sword at her feet, and talk about the last drop of his blood: yet, though no one saw him but the Being to whom the vow was made, there was a glow upon his cheek, a fire in his eyes, and a loftiness in his bearing as he muttered through his compressed lips, "If I forsake thee, in life or in death, may God forsake me! I have done evil deeds, which make me unworthy that this trust should be placed in my hands, but, now I am leagued with Heaven itself in protecting innocence, may I be an outcast from Heaven if I do not strive to deserve it! If I cannot save thee, I can at least show thee how to die."

The fading morning star now looked in upon them through the hazel bushes: but the gazer heeded it not. No! the star which hung so lovely in the heavens was given up for that far lovelier star which now had only him to hang on for support. At this moment the troubled sleeper

awoke with a start and a shudder; and, throwing around a hurried glance, said, half aloud, "Thank God, we are safe!"

Notwithstanding t[illegible]g lady had been accustomed to use the [illegible]" I do not think that in the present c[illegible]neant "We ourself." No! I verily believe [illegible]esty meant to include in that little word all [illegible]he subjects over whom she at that moment held sway; a very absolute sway, it must be confessed, in spite of all her very correct notions about liberty. At least, this is the only way in which I can account for her blushing so much when their eyes met, and, from a certain something in his, she became aware she had been overheard.

Where is the woman without art? I never met one, and I never wish to meet one! that is, such art as I allude to. How often does it not get man out of an awkwardness which his own blundering efforts would never accomplish? The circumstance of Montfort's coat being off was instantly seen, and as instantly seized upon to create the di-

version which both required; for now his cheeks were glowing, and he was beginning to look very silly too.

"This is unkind kindness and cruel pity," said the lady, in a tone almost severe. "Oh, do not, I intreat you, ever again spare my bodily sufferings at the expense of my feelings. What I ought to owe you, I am proud to owe you; but think better of me than to suppose I would wish to escape my own share of sufferings by heaping tenfold on you."

The fair speaker felt quite provoked at the impertinence of her own eyes, for, by their grateful looks, they contradicted all she was saying in the most barefaced manner. "Faster than her tongue did make offence, her eye did heal it up," so that at the end of her lecture, although Montfort stood before her as a culprit, it seemed to be for a crime he was neither ashamed of nor sorry for; in fact, a less penitent sinner could not well be conceived.

And, for my own part, I must observe that,

although it might be all very well for the lady to think of what he must have suffered, I cannot say I pity him one bit. Such lips murmuring near, and such a heart beating within a few yards of one's own, must surely produce a very comfortable degree of warmth.

However, notwithstanding that he had no objection to such a scolding, he prevented any thing more being said on the subject, by asking her Majesty "If she felt refreshed?"

The answer showed that story-telling is not naturally confined to the lower orders, as I thought it was, for the lady answered, "Yes, I have slept a great deal, and feel much refreshed;" whereas the truth was, she was so very cold and wretched, in spite of all his care, that anybody else would have looked downright ugly.

In asking the question, Montfort had, as in duty bound, called her "Her Majesty."

"Oh, do not, do not use that idle word again to me!" said she.

"I will not, if you do not wish it," r
Montfort; "and it would be better for me to
myself of the habit of it, to prevent the pos
of my doing so when it would betray you."

"Then never use it again; for," continue
with a sorrowful kind of vehemence, "I c
bear to hear it!"

"I will not!" rejoined he; "that is, not
I see you in perfect safety."

"Perfect safety!" repeated the despond
girl, and burst into a flood of tears.

Montfort tried to comfort and re-assure he
There was no need; for the feeling, although over
powering, was but for a moment; and when it had
passed away she said, "Forgive me this weak-
ness! It is an offence against God, who has pre-
served us so wonderfully; and a cruelty to you,
who have hazarded so much for me. Besides, it
will give you the idea that I shall bear our fate
badly if we are taken; which I hope there is no
presumption in saying, I feel assured will not be
the case. But do not let me hear that word again

from you. Call me by my plain name—call me Maria. It is only kindness, and *such* kindness as I receive from you, that can support me under my trials—not form!"

Montfort looked anxious to speak, but appeared as if he hardly dared to keep his promise—as if he thought it would be almost high treason against her Majesty to obey her Majesty's commands; and his perplexity brought a smile on the face where tears had so lately been. When, however, in addition to the encouraging smile, an irresistibly soft and feminine voice said, "Well, what am I called?" he no longer hesitated—"Maria, then! dear Maria! I will address you as the kindest brother; and, need I say, with all a brother's respect as well as kindness?—But I must intreat you not to increase the misery of your situation by blaming yourself, when, on the contrary, you deserve every praise. Think how little prepared you were by your previous life to meet what you have undergone. Think how you have met it. I was always a believer in the strength of woman's

mind, but what you have shown has indeed astonished me in one so young."

"It is very kind of you to try to reconcile me to myself; and, to tell you the truth, I am pleased with some parts of my conduct, but I cannot admit that I was not wrong just now."

"Well!" said Montfort, smiling, "if you are so particularly anxious about it, you shall have been as wrong as you please in this one instance; but I think the weakness may be forgiven, in consideration of the strength you have shown on all other occasions."

"Oh, believe me to be sincere when I say I feel that that strength was not my strength, but given to me because my intentions were good. Courage, where we know we are doing evil deeds, I cannot understand. Where we are conscious we may humbly look to our Maker for support, I think the weakest may hope to find it."

Whilst this dialogue passed, Maria (which, for the future, we shall call her, as we have her own

gracious permission for so doing) sat up upon what had served as her bed, and Montfort stood beside her; but the day now coming on fast, he, after carefully looking at his carbine and pistols, advised his charge to move about a little to get rid of the stiffness she must feel from having been so long in one position. When she got up, she could hardly stand, and he was obliged almost to carry her for a few turns. This would have been a bad beginning of a race for life or death, which they were liable at any moment to be put to.

When Maria had somewhat recovered, they washed their faces and hands in a pool of water, and sat down to breakfast. Their table-cloth was fair to view, and their table sufficiently large. The former being fresh green grass and wild flowers, and the latter of no less extent than the surface of this terrestrial globe;—but, I grieve to say, the part of the table at which they were seated was but badly provided; and poor Maria found, what Timon was threatened with, that

"the cold brook" would not "caudle her morning taste."

But their hard fare would have been only a subject of merriment if unconnected with any thing more distressing, for neither of them had yet reached a "care-about-eating age," but what at any time would have been a bad part of the joke; it was not enough for them. It consisted of a bit of hard bread and a large turnip. Montfort had eaten a little portion of each when Maria was asleep, just to save his conscience and cheat the devil, and now protested that he had taken his share already: but this shallow artifice was of no use; for Maria, although too well bred to tell him he had told a story, very well knew that he had done so—touching the quantity, at least, and therefore would only eat on condition that he ate with her.

"What!" said she, "have you not brought yourself into this danger for me? and shall we not share our last crust together?" She ate her hard meal with cheerfulness, and seemed

anxious to efface from Montfort's mind the recollection of her late despondency; and when something happened to be mentioned which touched upon it, she even laughed, as she said, "Now Mr. Philosopher, for you are quite a philosopher sometimes, pray explain to me why your just now mentioning our escape—a thing, too, that we have so often spoken of before—should have had such an uncontrollable effect upon those feelings which have stood firm when there was surely so much more reason for their giving way?"

"If I could do that, Maria, I should be a philosopher indeed! But I will tell you, when I can tell myself, why a blade of grass sometimes brings to my mind the wonders of Him who created it; and, at others, I look upon it with about as intellectual a gaze as the beast who is just going to eat it."

"What, then," said Maria, "I am not to have even the comfort of hearing my ill-behaviour accounted for philosophically?"

'No, nor your good behaviour either!"

By the time they had got to this part of their discourse, Maria looked as little displeased with herself as with her companion: and, of the latter, it may be remarked, how very soon he learnt to call her by her plain name, notwithstanding his extreme modesty at first. The request of a person of her rank is, of course, a command; but, from the way in which "Maria" was afterwards always in his mouth, I hardly think he could have looked upon this as a mere cold point of duty; or, if it was only a duty, and a disagreeable one, he certainly was most exemplary in performing it.

And, with her rank, the young queen seemed anxious to lay down the habit of commanding, and to wish at once to sink—no, to rise—into the dependent woman, who, by her very helplessness, commands still more; for she now said—"You must always make me do as you wish; as, in our present situation, you must know far better than I do what ought to be done. You may find me

refractory sometimes at first, from my not lately having had any one to controul me; but now I must not have a will of my own—only learn to obey yours."

But scarcely had she finished the sentence, when, their scanty meal being over, she did exercise one little bit of authority. It was, however, in that in which woman is often obliged to exercise it, and in which I believe she was intended to exercise it—in pointing the way to heaven.

"Come," said the fair maiden, before they began their perilous journey, "let us ask protection and help from Him who alone can give it."

They knelt down and prayed fervently that He, the Maker of the heavens above, the mountains, woods, and rocks around, would pity and save two of his helpless creatures, surrounded by their enemies; which having done, they felt a confidence — not that they must be so saved, for they were no blind enthusiasts—but that they were now better prepared to meet whatever fate should be their lot.

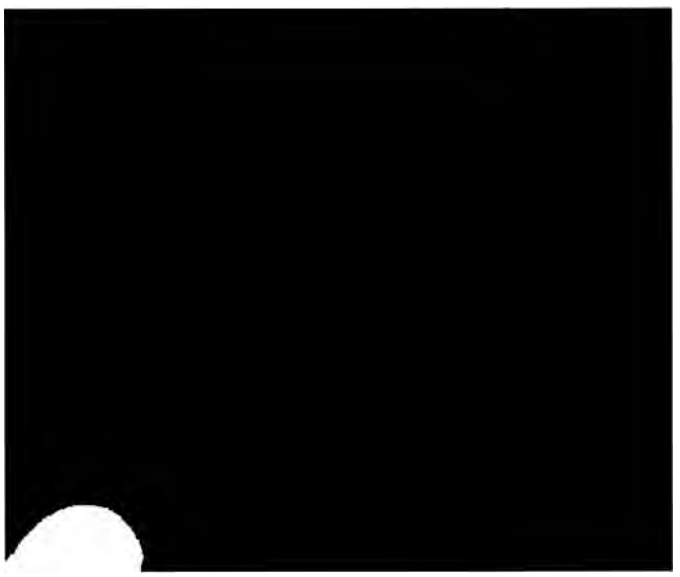
I must own I think they were right so to feel; for I acknowledge myself a humble but most sincere disciple of Chateaubriand. With him do I say, "at the present day, it may appear somewhat strange to talk of vows and pilgrimages; but, in regard to this subject, I have no sense of shame, and have long ranged myself in the class of the weak and superstitious. But if I have not the virtues which shone of yore in the Sires De Courcy, De Nestle, De Castillon, De Montford,—faith, at least, is left me, and by this mark might I yet be recognised by the old crusaders." And if I am not disposed to deny the altar, neither am I inclined to renounce the throne: on the contrary, here again am I an imitator of Chateaubriand—that is, of his weaknesses; for I am so stupid, that a portion of my regard will attach to those by whom benefits reach us: I cannot altogether abstract the good we receive by the kingly institution from the person of the individual king through whom that good comes to us.

This is unphilosophical, no doubt; but, nevertheless, I do not envy the more correct cold-heartedness of those who can do so. In spite of all that is said by the "greasy rogues," and their strange allies—the illuminati, Loyalty is, to me, an elevating and a knightly feeling; and fortunately, in this land, whilst our happy constitution is spared to us, it is not only compatible with, but one and the same thing as, the most devoted attachment to the liberties of the country.

I do not expect to get any thing by what I have now said, except, indeed, that great advantage of being laughed at by those whose praise is the only injury they have the power to inflict—for "getting" is all on the other side; besides, should the Destructives charge me with this, I hereby inform them I intend to remain so strictly incog., that, even if His Majesty were to set the Home Secretary and all his police to find me out, they would not succeed. The only way in which he could

possibly discover me would be to offer me a pension of three thousand pounds a-year, and put it on my allegiance to come forward and accept it: then, of course, consistently with my own professions, I could not refuse; even Joseph Hume himself would see the propriety of my obeying — that is, he would if the case were his own.

Maria and Montfort then went along the ridge of the mountain with as much haste as caution would permit, keeping under shelter of the patches of pine wood, wherever that was practicable; but the extreme exertion of walking



clothes, which he had at first procured for her,—entreaties very natural for her to make, but which he now thought he might have compromised her safety in having attended to; he therefore determined to leave her in the first secure place he could find, and go down to some hut under pretence of getting bread, in hopes of being able to procure both it and a suit of clothes at the same time.

When he found such a place, he had great difficulty to get Maria's consent that he should leave her.

"They could, she was sure, fast very well until to-morrow; and then, perhaps, they might procure food without danger. Indeed, after such a plentiful breakfast, she did not see how they could be hungry again for the day."

"But why should you now be more alarmed at my quitting you than you are usually, Maria?" said Montfort.

"I never think much of danger when we share it together," replied she.

"But you cannot be in any danger in this spot.

dear Maria, or I would not leave you for the world."

"Oh, I was not thinking of myself!" hastily exclaimed the artless girl.

Montfort was much moved: he said quickly—"For God's sake, let me go!"

Maria was not a little astonished at the vehemence of his exclamation, and quite at a loss to account for it; but, seeing him so anxious and determined, she thought it was her hard duty to obey, especially as her promise always to do so had not been registered more than one hour. She therefore gave him her hand, and they parted.

CHAPTER II.

——"Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy."

SHAKSPEARE.

NEVER before was mortal man so glad to get away from any thing half so pretty as Maria! She seemed a sort of upas to him, whose effect was suffocating instead of poisonous; and it was not until he was at least a hundred yards off that he breathed freely.

At length, after looking very profound for some time, he began to mutter to himself; but the only sentence that could be clearly made out was—"My personal dangers are the least part of the perils I have to encounter;" and

he went on his way, making righteous resolutions —particularly righteous for one who was then contemplating a burglary.

If his muttering, little of it as was overheard, has not already sufficiently explained the state of his feelings, I must endeavour to do so.

He was in truth placed in a cruel situation: had the young queen not "fallen from her high estate," he might have looked upon her as we look up to what is so far above us, that, although it may excite our admiration, it enters not into our feelings, because it seems scarcely to partake of our nature;—but, being now brought close to her, he had discovered qualities which distance might have kept from his view,—a gentleness and yieldingness of manner, joined to an unswerving determination of purpose where firmness is principle—a forgetfulness of self, that seemed to say she was upon this earth by some mistake,—and a singleness of heart that he had never seen equalled. Brought up in courts, courts had not

spoilt her;—when flattery had done its worst, it had left her with feelings as true to nature as those of "the maid that milks and does the meanest chares."

The effect of all this upon my hero I need not describe, although I promised to do so; for I know what young ladies will guess it to be, when I tell them, that could he have chosen his fate (as there was no earthly hope but that Maria's escape must separate them), it would have been, to die at her side in the moment of achieving it;—but then the thought would come to him—"However unworthy of her, queen or no queen, the woman might grieve for one so devoted. Oh! rather than she should grieve, let me live on— in misery, if it must be so!"

'Tis odd that, in our wildest ravings, however wretched we may fancy ourselves, we generally conclude by thinking that, on the whole, it is better we should live than die, even though our deaths could be brought about in the most satisfactory and sentimental manner possible. This makes one shrewdly suspect, that even lovers are not half so fond of dying as they always profess to be.

It may now be expected, as I have told his feelings, that I should say something of Maria's. I would rather not,—I don't like to meddle with ladies' feelings in any way;—in fact, I quite dread it: I always fear to do, or suffer, mischief: they are, to me, the down and thorns of the same thistle. I fancy it almost impossible to touch them without crushing, or being torn, or both. I shall, therefore, be very cautious how I approach Maria's, even with a view of only describing them —very cautious. I think I shall confine myself to saying what they were not—what she did not feel.

She did not feel that her dignity was in danger from being thus dependent on one so much beneath her in worldly rank; for, to say the truth, she had too high an opinion of the real dignity of her own nature to permit this. The pomp that hedges Majesty about, she knew, could never have weighed much in such a mind as Montfort's; but that nobility of soul, which she was conscious of possessing, she felt would find an answering nobility in his. She thought truly; for never, when

power and splendour were around her, and the ensigns of royalty waved in her train, did he look upon her with one half the heart-felt respect he gave her in this lonely hour.

Neither was her delicacy unnecessarily alarmed: innocent herself, she reposed in her innocence, and clung to his support with as much confidence as she would have done to that of her father, secure that she could neither be deceived nor misunderstood.

Yet, with her sole protector but a few years older than herself; indebted to him for escape from that from which the warm young heart must needs shrink back, however prepared to meet it—from death; cut off for a time from the rest of the world, and forced to lean on him as her only support in body and in mind; and this at the age when love makes wild work in the heart—ay, even in the heart of a princess, if our own beloved and lamented one is a proof—blessings on her for it!—it is not to be wondered at if Maria found her situation a strange one.

And, it being strange, the only thing to be done was to "as a stranger give it welcome," and endeavour to reconcile herself to its strangeness; the best way to effect which, she thought, would be, to persuade herself that they really were to each other, in feelings, what it was considered prudent for them to pass as in name—brother and sister; and this she attempted in the following short and summary manner:—

"Could the fondest brother (would that I had one!) have hazarded more for me, or shown me more devoted care and kindness? Oh! I am sure he looks upon me as a sister!"

Her royal reflections were never more confoundedly at fault,—Montfort would have hated the very idea; nor was it long before Maria herself began to think without regret of their not being such very near relations as she had made out in fancy.

But I am tired of saying what Maria was not: how describe by negatives one who was the reverse of a negative character? To our story, then, where, if

what her feelings were does not soon appear, I write in vain.

Montfort had observed a hut about two miles down the mountain side, which, under cover of a ravine, he could approach without being seen until he was close to it. To this he boldly bent his course, in hopes of finding what he wanted, and little apprehending interruption, as it evidently belonged to a shepherd, the members of whose families, from tottering infancy to tottering age, usually spend the whole day out of doors with the flocks; at which time the house is left to "keep itself" with the doors unlocked, inasmuch as they seldom have locks, the inhabitants of this simple land not being sufficiently civilized to be dishonest.

All his speculations were more than fulfilled; for, in addition to plenty of provisions, he found in the large ornamented and hereditary chest some clothes which were evidently the "Sunday best" of the family. It went against his conscience to take them away from the poor people; but when he thought of who was to wear

them, conscience got a hint that she might just as well hold her tongue, and save herself the trouble of saying a word more upon the subject. Although naturally an honest man,—that is, if men *are* naturally honest, which seems doubtful,—I verily believe for Maria he would have ventured to steal the wig off any judge's head in the land,—not that he thought she would have looked particularly well in it.

Montfort took such clothes as he conceived would be least objectionable to the intended wearer, to please her, and such as he thought would be most becoming, to please himself. He also took a good supply of bread, wine, and meat; and he sighed as he put a large pair of scissors in his pocket.

Now there is nothing to make one very sentimental in a pair of tailor's shears, but Montfort could not help thinking of the service they were



unconscious of it. Yes, for the life of him he could not help it! all the time he was holding up the cloak to prevent "the winds of Heaven to visit her face too roughly," he could not keep his fingers off them. They would touch those beautiful locks in spite of his repeatedly telling himself that it was not proper. But I am sure he did not do any harm to them, for the smallest point of contact was sufficient. Let but the tip of his little finger feel their softness, and he was perfectly content. It was enough for his happiness.

Montfort was not only a rogue, but a most unreasonable rogue; for not satisfied with committing a robbery, he wanted at the same time to save his conscience: but how to do this was the difficulty. If he left money for what he took, it might create suspicion; if he did not, it would be a positive robbery, and might really distress the poor people. At length he thought of hiding money in a flour cask, which was not likely to be emptied for some time, but which would surely be emptied at last. This was a way of compounding, for if

the loss of these things would at first cause them distress, their finding two or three times their value in the end would make it up to them.

Montfort lost no time in returning, having all the while the most poetical thoughts imaginable ; such as, that he could not at that moment find in his heart to shoot even a wolf, because its poor little cub might be up amongst the rocks expecting its return. Nevertheless, he was all the time plotting high treason against his own little cub, as busily as he had been planning burglary on his descent. He was meditating how he should compel his lawful sovereign, who had so lately become his sister, to consent to be transformed into his little brother Paolo, or even into his servant—his page, if need should be. In effecting this change he did not apprehend any opposition from the feelings of the Queen, but very great from the feelings of the woman.

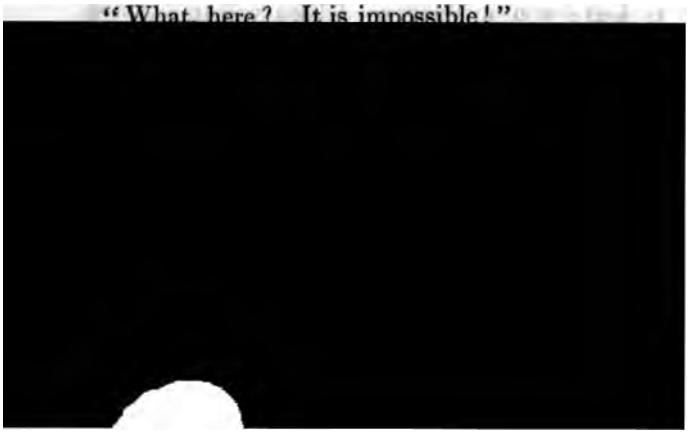
As he approached the spot where he had left Maria, his eyes naturally travelling there before him, he saw her show herself for a moment,

make a sign of caution, and beckon him to go round to the left, instead of directly up the ravine; all of which he carefully and quickly did. On his reaching her, Maria half sprung into his arms, and seemed for an instant nearly insensible from excess of emotion; but quickly recovering, she pointed down the ravine, at the bottom of which sat a group of soldiers eating and drinking, and whom he had only avoided by obeying her signals. She was still leaning trembling on his arm when he saw this group, and saw too that she must unavoidably and knowingly have exposed herself to be seen, to warn him of his danger. It was a moment of feeling, and not of reason: rank, worldly distinctions, all vanished away, and there stood before him only the woman—the woman who had risked her own life to save his—beautiful as the vision of an angel. Oh, how he longed to clasp her to his bosom! but at the instant that the impulse so to do was almost irresistible, some of the group moved, and Maria's imminent peril enabled him to overcome it.

Their pursuers, for such they were, now lay down to take their siesta, after having first placed one of their party on a rock above them to keep watch; and, unfortunately, in such a situation that it was impossible for the fugitives to leave their hiding-place without being seen by this sentinel, except by crawling upon their hands and knees with the utmost caution behind some stones. For Maria to attempt this in her present dress, so easily perceived at a distance, would have been madness; and for her to do it with the cloak about her, impossible.

Montfort whispered to her, "You have saved my life! let me save yours. Instantly put on these clothes, whilst I watch the group. There is not a moment to lose, and it is our only chance."

"What, here? It is impossible!"



"And mine?"

'Oh, no! fly, fly instantly! and when you are safe I will attempt it; and should I not succeed, no torture they can think of shall make me tell them a word about you. Fly, I entreat; I command you."

Sometimes in our most plain and simple moments, when violent feelings have most "beat us from our fence" as to artificial manner, we feel inclined to be what is called theatrical: wherefore I conclude that the most outrageous villain of a barn-actor may be the most natural character after all.

Montfort now, rather in this style, pointed to a rock, and said, with a grim smile, "Tell that to fly from you. It will be just as likely to obey, as I to leave you in danger. If you will it so, here let us wait our fate."

The burning shame which the poor girl felt she would gladly have given up her own life to have avoided; but, to be the death of her preserver, to save herself from any thing but sin? Oh, no! she could not do it!

It was a cruel situation for both. Maria crept behind a jutting part of the rock, whilst Montfort watched the party below with something of that kind of feeling which prompts to leap from off the dizzy precipice at once, rather than linger on in a suspense that is madness—that almost tempted him to end his agony at once by using his arms against Maria and himself, instead of against their enemies.

After Montfort had waited a sufficient time, he asked Maria if she were ready; but got no answer. She had had just strength enough to dress herself, when shame, fright, and grief, had been too much for her, and she lay stretched

When Montfort had recovered her, Maria lay with her head in his lap, her burning cheek and brow seeming actually scorched. She looked as if her body had awoken, but not her mind—as if that were still bound in sleep or lethargy; and when he told her he must cut off her hair, it seemed to him that she would have given consent to his cutting off her head in the same passive manner. The violence with which she had been agitated had produced a stupor that was frightful.

Concealing in his bosom one tress, Montfort hastily completed his task, hoping that exertion might rouse her. He tied their things up in a bundle, to drag after him as they crawled between the rocks; but, when all was ready, he dreaded to make the attempt, as there was one place where Maria would be obliged to follow him alone, and this, in her present state, he thought almost impossible: however, to remain there was certain destruction.

Maria did better than Montfort hoped for, and

followed him as if mechanically. They got on very well except where they were forced to crawl, when, from weakness, Maria fell, and some loose stones giving way, made a noise which alarmed the watch. Montfort instantly lay down, and made a sign to Maria to do the same. She seemed for a time to be alive to their danger, for she obeyed, and fixed her looks on him, and never moved them until he whispered to her to advance again. The sentinel probably thought the noise was occasioned by a goat amongst the crags, for, without moving from his station, he threw a stone in the direction, which fell almost close to Maria's head, who never moved. [illegible]

rewarded for their exertions, that they never saw this party of their pursuers afterwards.

When they had got to some distance, and Montfort found that her exertions did not break Maria's waking trance, he tried to excite her by saying whatever he thought might catch her feelings. "Dear, dear Maria! do not be alarmed! God must, and will, protect such innocence as thine! If not, O who shall hope to claim His protection?" Still she went on in death-like silence, without even a sigh or a sob, her eyes seeming to cling to the ground. Montfort would have given worlds to have heard her cry.

They now came to a place where there were a great number of trees. The security gave Montfort time to think. They walked on slowly for a few moments, his mind nearly as distracted as he feared Maria's was likely to become, for to look upon her thus was torture. "Maria," said he, pressing her hand, "dear, dear Maria! Speak to me! for God's sake, speak to me! Break this horrid and unnatural silence! Is it possible that

I can have offended you?" As he said this, he observed her to tremble for an instant, but her look and her silence were as fixed as ever; and she sunk back again into her stillness.

Montfort did not, as he evidently ought to have done, stop to philosophize about this single and most extraordinary instance of a woman having been in vain requested to speak,—some idea of which, however, seems to have passed through his mind, by his having called it "unnatural silence,"—but seeing that all the little sense which his fright had left him had no effect, he tried nonsense—as people usually do when they have got to the end of their sense—and began to rave about himself. It must, however, be admitted, that his small remaining stock of penetration had enabled him to discover that this was the only chord which could be made to vibrate, however clumsily it was touched. "Maria, I have lost your confidence, but I may regain it;—in death—and I vow, that the hour of your captivity shall be the last of my—"

"Hush! hush!" said she, hastily interrupting him, "hush, hush!" and began to cry bitterly.

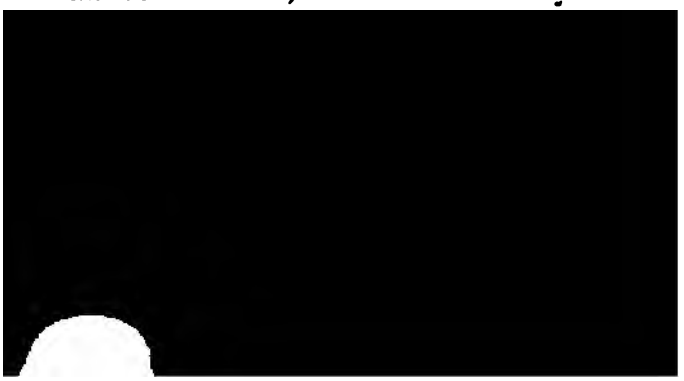
Seeing he had now produced the effect he was so anxious for, Montfort only tried to soothe her, but not to check her tears. "Oh, thank God for this," said he; "these blessed tears will relieve you." After a time he ventured to say, as gently as he could, "but is this right, Maria? Are you not rather murmuring against the trials you have been exposed to, than showing your thankfulness for being delivered from them? What was our morning prayer? for protection and support. Have we not received both?—but is this the way to deserve them again? Perhaps I seem to speak harshly to you. A flatterer would not do so, but a sincere friend sometimes thinks it a duty."

"Oh! what would a flatterer be to me now? My friend, my true friend, bear with me for a short time. God bears with me, and will not one do so who may err like myself, though I have never known it?"

"Err like thee, Maria!" cried out Montfort, with

that half shriek which we give when somethi[illegible]g strikes so full upon our thoughts, that it sen[illegible] them sprawling out of our heads, without givi[illegible] us time to consider whether they are proper to [illegible] exhibited or no—without our knowing what th[illegible] are, or where the d—l they are going. "E[illegible] like thee, Maria? No! no! my errors hav[illegible] been crimes! yours, never more than faults Oh, do not compare them to such purity, or yo[illegible] will make them seem black indeed."

This speech made Maria somewhat mor[illegible] pleased with herself, but not a whit less pleased with Montfort, for she knew there was no truth in what he said of himself, although he believed it at the time he spoke. She knew that such a defenceless object as she was, being thrown on the protection of a generous nature, had exalted his ideas so much, that his former really venial



tempting it might be, for at once a thousand "beautiful apparitions" started into her face, and she shrunk from his look, and clung to him with such beseeching dependence—the motion slight, but too expressive of her feelings to be for a moment misunderstood—that Montfort, for the rest of the day, kept his head as straight to the front as a captain of grenadiers marching on a point.

Poor foolish girl! Why, I have known ladies put on that part of her new dress which she principally objected to without making the least fuss in the world about it; and if ever I get married, I sincerely hope that one more may be induced to wear them—provided she does it gracefully—then there may be a chance of my acting rightly!

Whilst daylight lasted they went on as fast as Maria's strength would permit; and as it faded, both her strength and her confidence increased. They found a secure place to pass the night in; which they did much in the same manner as the previous one—only that the

spot being sheltered, and no wind up, Montfort could not find an excuse for holding the cloak, and therefore sat a short distance from Maria during the hours of her sleep.

It was a great disappointment to Montfort on the following morning to find Maria's distress continue nearly as cruel as ever: but to reason with her on such a subject would be only making matters worse. He did venture to say, "I fear your disguise will not prove the protection to you which I hoped it would, if we find it necessary to trust to it:" but the bare mention of it seemed to make her so wretched, that he forbore, and trusted to Time—the sure, but bitter, reconciler to much worse things than this.

All the early part of the day, as they walked along, a pang would suddenly shoot through the distressed girl; she would tremble, and the boiling blood would gush along her arm so as to be felt through both their dresses. In the afternoon she seemed to make every effort to command herself; but still, ever and anon, even

when Montfort most sought to cheer her, the burning blush would come :—the shudder, and a shutting fast of the eyes, as we shut them when we would shut out thought—but in vain.

On these occasions Montfort's art went no further than to try to reconcile her to herself—to that self which had done no wrong—by praising her: and he did, to borrow a phrase of Rosalind's, "lay it on with a trowel." But it had its effect; and for this reason—we can bear praise from those we love that would disgust us from others; because, although we know we do not deserve it, we yet believe that the feelings the parties bear us make them think differently. We set down the excess of it, not to our deserving, but to their affection, and therefore it is a beautiful fault to our eyes, which, though itself a falsehood, speaks only of truth.

But I must not have it thought that Maria showed an excess of modesty—not prudery. It is all very well to talk of wearing the ——— —Stop! "Oh, breathe not its name!"—Well! then, the garment I have already alluded to—but,

however anxious ladies may be to put them on, I can tell them they would be a little ashamed to be seen in them. Besides, all those who wear them properly, take care to let their petticoats hide them, as has been cleverly observed of blue-stockings. But should any young damsel still be inclined to be hard upon Maria, I must challenge her to make the proof in her own person, and permit me to be umpire.

Maria was destined to be restored to her calmness and her confidence, that "sweet trust," in a very rough manner—the opposite of Montfort's soothings—but it was effectual, and it thus befel:—

On the second morning from that on which she had been obliged to take up a disguise that disquieted her so much, they were just ready to begin their journey, when they saw, toiling up the hill, and evidently in pursuit of them, three armed men. Maria first became aware of the circumstance by observing Montfort's eyes fixed in the direction, and that his countenance had assumed that stern, fierce, but collected cast which

she had before remarked when they were in imminent danger; but it never struck her with such effect as now. Stern as it was, it sealed Maria's fate!

People who try to reduce love to rule, are often, like most theorists, obliged to make facts bend to their system, because their system won't bend to the facts. How often do we see persons of similar dispositions love, and pass their lives happily together? But how much oftener do we see persons of opposite dispositions do so? Yet it is considered no great feat among thorough-bred system-mongers, by hewing a little bit here, and chipping a little bit there, to make these adverse facts all fit neatly in together.

After all, judging *of* systems is seldom any thing more than judging *by* ourselves; and as I happen to know one gentleman who fancies himself very melancholy, but who nevertheless would be extremely apt to fall in love with Mr. Thomas Hood, if Mr. Thomas Hood were a pretty young lady, I of course should adopt the

[redacted] if obliged to agree [redacted] But I do not.—I do not think human nature such a very plain and simple affair as to authorise me to jump to the conclusion, "that what is my case, must necessarily be that of my neighbour." I do not think the machinery of man is quite so simple—not so exactly like that of a hand-organ—or, if so, at least we are meant to play different tunes: not all set, as the last I heard was to three psalms and Paddy Carey.

There is likewise a great variety in the manner of receiving the *coup-de-grace* in love; that is, when it comes in the shape of a coup for some

[redacted]

a merry laugh ; and probably the laugher herself is placed *hors-de-combat* by the most hang-dog look imaginable. One might truly say to Love, as Sir John Falstaff does to Dame Quickly, (somewhat unjustly, the dame seems to think,) "A man knows not where to have thee." Now my sweet, my gentle, my most soft and feminine Maria's fate was sealed by a look that would have done honour to Captain Rock. She felt at once, that on that stern-looking being, "with brows of dauntless courage," she should love to hang her woman's weakness; and on him alone. Yes! even in that moment of fear, Maria's heart fluttered like a dove first venturing to try its wings—one flutter more, and lo! the young bird of peace had flown. But Maria's dove was never to come back to its sweet nest again—never! "How terrible he looks!" thought she, "but how subduing!"

Maria pondered much upon this afterwards. The girl had quite sense enough to know, though she could hardly tell what to make of it, that her

heart was about to quit her service; in fact, had given her warning several times. But it appeared so unaccountable, that the very thing which ought to have frightened her, should have made her love past redemption. She afterwards, with the greatest simplicity, began to ponder seriously, "If there could be any thing very stern or ferocious in her disposition? any thing fierce, inexorable, determined even unto blood?—But is he all these? Oh, only in the cause of right, of virtue, of Heaven, and of ——" Maria was going to pronounce her own name, but the thought that it would hardly be modest to do so, struck her just in time to prevent it.

All these reflections came when she had leisure to make them: at present she had only just time to think, "It must be thus men look when they destroy each other, and deface God's image upon earth." Which thought had hardly entered into her mind, when Montfort turned to her with a manner so altered that I should inevitably have compared it to the Tempest sunk to the Zephyr,

but that the simile "is something musty." By the way, in her after-philosophising on the loss of her heart, Maria did not allow sufficient weight to this change. It told deeply, because it showed her that a feeling for her rose in his bosom above the fiercest passions—indignation, hatred, revenge; and controlled them, as the moon still governs the seas, be they ever so stormy. Montfort said to her, as he hurried her along, "My dearest Maria, you often talk of what you owe me! You can now repay me beyond measure, if you will only keep up your courage!—I will defend you whilst I have life;—(the expression that crossed the girl's blanched cheek and brow showed that this idea brought little comfort)—and, with God's help, I am sure successfully; but if, whilst keeping them at bay, I should fall —attend to me! You must attend to me!—You may still escape, if you use every exertion: and recollect that you do not obey the will of God, if you do not so exert yourself."

"God help us!" was her only reply.

"He will! do not fear Him! But you promise to make every effort if I ——"

"I *will* strive to do God's will as far as He gives me strength! but I trust His mercy will grant us one fate."

Montfort hurried Maria along, under the idea that their pursuers might possibly have been nearly exhausted when they first came in sight of them, and that therefore her strength might suffice for their escape without coming to blows. And even in this extremity, his confident manner, and heroic bearing, served to cheer her up in a surprising way: but it quickly became evident that they must be overtaken, and he in an instant had decided how to act. "Keep up! keep up, noble girl! I only want to clear this open space, and gain the rocks at the edge of that thicket."

When they did reach them, Montfort said, "Now fly into the wood! and God protect you!"

"And you?" asked the panting girl.

"I meet them here!"

One little wave of the hand told Montfort all

that long story which he had been forced to employ so many words about when she bid him leave her to her fate on the former occasion; and told it quite as well, it seems, for he did not attempt to use arguments where he saw they were certain to be useless, but he instantly made her sit down under cover from their pursuers, for fear they might fire as they advanced.

Maria was not altogether so tractable in this matter as she ought to have been, but, under the influence of that fascination which sometimes will not permit us to look away from danger, she kept peeping through an opening in her rocky fence. Montfort had pretended to sink down quite exhausted, as soon as they reached the rocks, and then to endeavour to hide himself behind them. This he did to throw their enemies off their guard; but the moment he was out of sight, he examined his pistols and carabine, taking the former, one in each hand, and laying the latter beside him. He seemed to have the power

of multiplying his eyes; for whilst he made this examination, he kept a hawk-like watch upon their pursuers, and also took notice of Maria's imprudence—most providentially! for, in one instant of time, the foremost ruffian had fired, Montfort had pushed Maria's head down from her peeping-hole in no very gentle manner, and had received a ball through his left arm whilst in the act of doing so.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed he—meaning, it is thought by the commentators, not that he actually liked being shot through the arm, but that he thanked God the ball had passed through it rather than through Maria's head, which it inevi-

CHAPTER III.

"Fair maid, is 't thou wilt do these wondrous feats!"
SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Maria saw Montfort covered with blood, she gave one short shriek, but immediately, even before he could tell her to do so, picked up the pistol, which had been knocked out of his hand.

"Give it to me the moment I have fired the other."

"And the carabine?" asked she, with her senses perfectly restored.

"Yes, when I have fired the last pistol!"

Whilst Maria held the pistol with one hand, she with the other squeezed Montfort's wound as tight as she could, to try to stop the blood, which gushed through her fingers with such sickening warmth that at another time it might have made her faint.

"Noble girl!" said Montfort, as he looked at her for an instant employed in her painful office. He added, "But mind you don't shake me when I fire. It might make me miss."

"I will not! do not fear it!" said she, with that steadiness which alarm, that goes far beyond the agitating point, gives to some minds.

At this moment they contrasted strangely. Alike, and yet how unlike! Both still, but how different their stillness! Maria's pale face was turned to his with an expression that said, "I wait my fate; and if it is only yours, I will not complain."

Montfort was equally still; but his resignation cannot be boasted of. It was the resignation of

the tiger waiting in breathless silence until his prey comes within his spring.

Montfort knew his best chance lay in letting the enemy come very near before he fired. He seldom missed at a long shot, but was almost certain at a short. He was therefore much pleased to hear one panting wretch cheer the others on by saying "They have no arms." This was he who had already fired, and whom Montfort therefore had decided upon leaving until the last, but was almost tempted from his purpose when he perceived it to be the traitor L——.

When the fatal moment came, Montfort said, "For God's sake, Maria! be collected, and shelter yourself—hold that pistol exactly as you have it now, and don't let your hand shake, if possible!"

"Do not fear it," again repeated Maria, with an unfaltering voice. As she uttered these words, his first shot rung upon her ear, and the foremost ruffian stopped as suddenly as if he had run against a rock. He stood so long that an unpractised eye

might have been deceived, and Montfort, by his intense look and forward brow, seemed for a moment in doubt; but he began to sink slowly. The ball had cut in two the great artery which sustains the heart. Before he reached the ground a second knell had rung, and another of their pursuers sprung forward with a yell, and dropped dead almost at their feet: so quickly, owing to Maria's retaining sufficient presence of mind to attend to his directions, had he been enabled to fire both shots, that the second person had not time to check himself when he heard the first report, before he himself was struck right through the body.

As Maria gave Montfort the carabine, she looked out, and seeing that the traitor L——, who was flying on, witnessing the fate of his companions, was the only enemy left alive, she said, "Can you not spare that wretched man's life?"

"No! I cannot allow him to endanger yours a third time," replied he, so very slowly and deliberately, that Maria was at a loss to understand

the meaning of it, as his permitting the fugitive all this time to get further away seemed to contradict his words; but as she turned round once more to look at the fugitive, she saw his hand stretched out towards them, and at the same instant heard Montfort's last shot. The wretch spun round and fell lifeless across a rock.

"You are a mystery," said Maria, looking at him with awe. "For one so kind and good to do all this!"

"And what are you, noble and heroic girl? But we must leave this spot instantly!"

"No! not until I have bound up your arm."

"Yes! that must be done, for I do feel weak."

Maria then helped off his jacket, and with the assistance of such means as they could get, bound up his arm so that it did not bleed much. Luckily the artery had not been touched, or it might have cost the lives of both, for neither of them knew how to stop it; a thing which persons of every age and sex should know; for although it is not the fashion in our days for ladies to doctor their

wounded knights, nevertheless even Miss Figgins, going along Cheapside from the Poultry to Bow Church, might save a life by it. And for a soldier not to know it seems absurd. Yet how few do!

When this was done, Montfort thought it best to conceal the dead; and even in this Maria would have assisted, for although she still looked pale and bewildered, yet excitement, and her anxiety to be of use to her maimed protector, seemed to have carried her out of her native character; but Montfort positively forbade her. "No! you have seen horrors enough! but load the arms the while;" and he explained to her how to do it.

On the side of a limestone mountain, Montfort easily found a cleft to throw the bodies into. He covered the marks of their blood with loose stones, collected their own provisions, and got their cloak, which in the flight he had thrown down. They then began their journey; but he soon felt very faint, and so weak that he could hardly walk. As his strength failed, that of Maria seemed to

increase, and her spirit to rise with it. Instead of receiving assistance, she was able to give it; and said encouragingly, "This will soon pass off, do not fear it! He who has so protected us, will not desert us now. Sit down and rest on me."

Montfort smiled inwardly at the idea of a young girl trying to keep up his courage, of which, to say the truth, he now had a very good opinion; not from having done any thing very wonderful, but from what he felt he was capable of doing; but he knew too much of human nature to tell her that it was unnecessary. He knew, allowing her to do so, was a sure way of sustaining her own courage. How often do we gain that support which we seek to give! Nevertheless he went so far towards comforting her as to say, "Maria, I have still strength enough to defend you against twice as many assailants as those"—looking back, somewhat contemptuously, towards the spot they had left. He did not count very wildly in this, as he had added to their stock of arms two pistols which he took from the dead.

Montfort soon recovered a little, and by degrees was able to ease Maria of part of her burden; for she had taken most of their things from him as he grew weak. In her anxiety to get speedily as far as possible from the place of blood, she thought of proposing to throw away the cloak; but then the idea struck her of wrapping it round Montfort at night, to keep the cold air from his wound, and therefore she toiled on under her load, until he could again take his share of it.

They thus travelled on slowly, but so constantly that, when evening fell, they had gained many miles. Their discourse had partaken of that sobered, chastened cheerfulness which we feel when our hearts seem to lift themselves up in our bosoms in acknowledgment to the Being who has just preserved us from a great danger; and, as they went along, they breathed many a thanksgiving to that Being: nor were they ashamed to do so aloud.

Montfort now felt his arm very painful, although he had all along answered Maria's inquiries by

declaring that it did not give him any pain; and, as they were at a spot which afforded both shelter and water, he proposed to stop, for her sake as well as his own.

Maria had consulted him earnestly as to how his wound should be treated; for she seemed at once to have taken the arm that had suffered in her defence under her especial care, and talked as if it really belonged to her, and Montfort had nothing whatever to do with it, except bear the pain, which she would willingly also have taken from him; but, as her knowledge did not go much beyond putting on a bit of court-plaster, she was obliged to consult him on the occasion. Montfort told her, that to keep it clean and poultice it were all that such a trifling wound required, though how to accomplish the latter object was past his comprehension. Now she knew what to do, she did not, of course, condescend to talk to him any further upon the subject: women (God bless them!) are a very monopolising and absolute set upon such occasions. I once had an injured part of my person taken possession of by an old lady and three young ones:

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Maria attempted to wash it in the cold water, he could not help giving a start, which plainly told her how much he suffered.

"What can we do?" said she. "It must be washed, and you will never be able to bear this cold water."

But she was not nearly at her wit's end yet, although her speech seemed to say so. Now do not laugh at the poor girl's contrivance: there is nothing to laugh at in kindness, surely, however homely the method of showing it.—Maria hastily threw a handkerchief over the bared arm, to keep the cold off;—then, stooping down to the stream, she filled the prettiest mouth in the world with water, and when she had taken the chill from it by keeping it there awhile, she washed the wound.

I fear this story may make some fine gentleman sick: I can't help it,—I know it had no such effect on Montfort. On the contrary, had he spoken of it, I am sure he would at least have said, "Heaven's realm holds no such tide." This ablution was, in fact, the only thing that could have

been thought of, from which his tortured flesh would not have shrunk. Nevertheless I grant, the incident sounds almost absurd in the relation; but it was much nearer making Montfort cry than laugh. Yes! he who, a few hours before, had taken the lives of three of his fellow-creatures, and no nerve had trembled, was almost unmanned by this simple act of kindness.

By repeating this operation several times, Maria, at last, got the wound perfectly clean. Whilst she was doing it, Montfort said to her—"Maria, your resources are as exhaustless as your goodness:" for which, under other circumstances, she would have given him a smile; but she could not find it in her heart to smile when she looked at the hideous gaping wound before her.

A thought suddenly struck Maria, so bright, that her face quite shone with it. "Oh, could I not make the poultice in the same way?"

"To be sure you could!" said Montfort, equally brightening up, not so much at the thought of the benefit of the pou[illegible]as at where it was to come from.

The great fault that I find with book-characters is, that they are too characteristic. Yes, even Shakspeare's and Scott's. What person in real life does not, every now and then, think and act quite unlike himself? What person in a book ever does? Who is there that does not occasionally find ideas come into his mind which are quite in opposition to his feelings at the moment, and most outrageously out of place when compared to the situation he may chance to be in? But what author ever acknowledges such for his men and women? Characters always behave as if certain circumstances invariably acted on the mind in the same way; as if the mind took its colouring from the objects around it as surely as does the chameleon. Whereas, the truth is, that sometimes when all that meets our sight is *couleur de rose*, our souls are black; and at others, when we are encompassed by objects dark, dreadful, or dangerous, a ray of light comes struggling through the gloom, we know not whence,—and cheers us, we know not why. When we are going to be married, we may

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feel very serious; and when we are going to be hanged, perhaps we laugh. There are, to be sure, those who hold that the latter is the less serious affair of the two, and that therefore the feelings I have mentioned are quite in order; but in this opinion I do not put implicit faith. Be that as it may, I have, of a chilly November day, walked over a barren heath, whose utmost attempts at the picturesque came in the shape of a few furze bushes, and invested it with all that is bright and beautiful: my "bosom's lord" has not "sat lightly on his throne," but has got up, without any regard to decency, and danced a downright jig. On the other hand, when all around has been softness, freshness, and May, my spirits have lain upon the ground like the vapours of the *Grotto del Cano*, as heavy and as poisonous. And yet the face of Nature usually has the greatest possible effect on me. No! I mean to tell the world that we do not always catch a hue from the scenes we are amidst, but very often fling a tint upon them which they do not in themselves

possess; and in doing this, I shall, of course, excel Shakspeare and Scott; and if so, Nature herself had better look about her.

When, not nature, but nature's own—when Maria looked *about her*, as she finished her extraordinary task, she found Montfort laughing.

"What, in the name of goodness, can you be laughing at?" said she, quite astonished.

"At you, Maria; I was comparing you to a monkey."

"What do you mean?" repeated Maria, much less concerned at the compliment not being a flattering one, than fearing he had lost his senses.

"Why, I tell you I was comparing you to a monkey," replied he, laughing more than ever.

"Well, well! I know that; but in what respect?"

"Don't think I am mad for laughing at this moment; but I have somewhere heard of a crowd of monkeys getting about a wounded companion, and chattering, and chewing up herbs, and thrusting them into his wounds to cure them: and although

I cannot in this instance accuse you of chattering, —for, to do you justice, I have hardly heard the sound of your voice since we came here,—yet, when I saw your employment, I could not help thinking of the monkeys."

"Well," said Maria, quite gaily, "I only trust that the remedy may prove as unfailing with my wounded monkey, as, if I don't mistake, it is said to have done with the other."

"My wounded monkey!" Although this was the most natural phrase in the world for Maria to have used, considering what had gone before it, there was something in it Montfort could not forget. Never did mortal feel less displeased at being called a monkey. He could not get it out of his head,—mind, I don't say he tried. Sleeping or waking, it was ringing in his ears, and thus he dissected it:—"My!" why, it was claiming him as her own property, that was evident. "Wounded!" there was so much pity in the way she pronounced the word; and we all know what that is akin to. "Monkey!" we use it as a pet-

name—as a term of endearment. "Ah! if she should? Surely! but oh no, it cannot be—and it must not be—and it is not! But if it should be? why then I should be a scoundrel! No, I shouldn't; for I never tried to win it, though prizing it next to heaven! That is, I never tried to win it in the common way, and I never will be so dishonourable. It is not; it is not! It is only gratitude—the kindest, the most amiable gratitude; and I must not prove myself a fool by mistaking it for any thing else. Besides, I am so unworthy of her. Oh, but women don't think of that, poor sŏuls!—if they did, how could they ever get husbands?"

I have endeavoured to string the poor man's ideas together for him, but they came forth in a still much less clear manner. But who can be logical and in love too?

Although an affair in which it is not held necessary that reason should have much to do, Montfort had yet a more intelligible cause for the suspicions that now haunted him than his attendant's merely chewing up a bit of bread, or the

speech which was its consequent, comes to. In their greatest extremity, when Maria had only just escaped one appalling danger, and knew not that the next instant might not bring another, from which there would be no escape, he had seen "a form of life and light" striving to shelter him, regardless of its own peril—it bent before him, light and graceful as a wreath of morning mist half encircling a rock, and looking as frail a defence.

This had not been lost on Montfort, although even in that dreadful moment Maria sought to make the action unobserved. He saw it all, but would not set it down to love. "No!" said he, "such a nature as hers is fully capable of an act like this from gratitude, and gratitude alone."

When Maria had dressed Montfort's arm, nearly to her own satisfaction, and fully to his, she prepared a bed, and a seat for the watcher. They then sat down and talked for half an hour before their sleeping-time arrived. Maria was conscious of that satisfaction which the right-minded feel when they have been placed in difficult situations, and think they have acted well

under them. This is quite compatible with the most humble opinion of ourselves; indeed, is rather a proof of such humility, as it implies somewhat of surprise that we should have acted so well; whereas a person, the reverse of humble, is never surprised at any feat he performs. This gave a placid cheerfulness to her manner, which hardly seemed to agree with the violent scenes she had gone through in the course of the day. Montfort's manner, too, like Maria's, was cheerful; but his had a slight degree of intoxication in it. He had not lost the excitement of the fight; the memory of it brought the conviction that he had acted throughout as he should have acted—in spite of his modesty, he could not help applauding himself; and O, delightful! he had a second time saved the life he valued most. Then, as to his wounded arm—why he would not have given it for two of the other. Their minds, it appears, dwelt upon the same subject, for soon after they had sat down, Montfort said, "Maria, will you answer me one question truly?"

She made the same reply that any other Miss would have done: "I will do so truly, if I do so at all."

"Do you not feel that you have acted well to-day?"

"Oh, it is very easy for us to tell the truth," replied Maria, "when it is to praise ourselves. Yes, I do; and I was just thinking of it; and I consequently feel, in spite of all that has happened, proportionably—should I say, happy; and my preserver in such a state?"

"I am quite easy and comfortable now," returned Montfort.



encourages us to tell all our objections when we are in doubt about the propriety of doing so.

"Surely you should, in self-defence. There can be no doubt about that," returned Maria; "but the other was already flying."

Montfort said, with an altered tone, which Maria at the moment could not exactly understand, "Perhaps I was wrong; but as we could not possibly let him go altogether, to alarm our other enemies and bring them upon us, I should have taken him prisoner, and brought him on with us; and then, when I should have been obliged to go away to get our provisions, you could have kept guard over him until my return."

Maria shuddered at the bare idea of it, but said, "I know you do not mean that! what do you mean?"

"Then what other choice had I?"

"True," replied Maria; "but should we not the rather have run the risk of letting him go than ——?"

"Such sentiments," interrupted Montfort,

" become the woman perhaps, but not the queen; neither do they become men, though men too often act on them. How they can reconcile it to their consciences, I do not know. What! through a most wickedly weak notion of charity, allow a wretch taken in the fact of committing an atrocious crime to escape, that the innocent may perhaps suffer by him afterwards—in his stead, as it were? Those who have to punish, too, too often think thus; but if they always did so, what crime would ever meet its reward, for who does not seek to fly when he cannot succeed? Who does not repent when he is found out? Many have the idea, how shall man, with all his weaknesses, dare to punish? My idea is, how shall man, with all his weaknesses,—that is, when he cannot know the evil consequences that may ensue,—dare to forgive? In this I do not of course allude to the injuries we ourselves sustain, for those we are bidden to forgive; but only to cases in which we are called on to judge between others: where we are so, it is our duty to protect the innocent and punish the guilty.

In such event, if we forgive merely out of regard to our own feelings, we commit a crime; but if, on the other hand, our best judgment tells us we may extend mercy without injuring society, it is of course a greater crime not to forgive. Had I taken that wretched man's life lightly, without sufficient thought, or not from principle, I should have condemned myself; but I did so from a sense of duty to you and to man in general; and would to God that all my sins sat as easy on me as this affair does! But if you are not quite convinced yet, let me ask you for what you thought his arm was stretched out towards us as he fell?"

"I do not know," replied she.

"I thought so!" returned Montfort, "or his death would never have troubled you. It was to fire his last shot, and I was only just in time to stop him. I suppose the coward thought by my letting him go so far, that I had no arms left, and therefore he might make this last attempt in safety; but I——"

Montfort was evidently going on with a vicious

speech, when Maria hastily laid her hand on the arm that was not wounded, and said, "Thank you! thank you! you have removed a load from my heart, and set it at rest; but do not look so fierce and exulting. I now know the act was right, but it is *not* right to triumph in it thus,—and it is not your nature to do so." Maria said this with that authority which the good feel they possess when they conscientiously reprove those whom they see erring—an authority which gives confidence to the humblest, because it seems to come direct from above.

Montfort felt it in its full force; certainly not the less so for her having over him an authority of a nature not altogether so spiritual. He did not for a moment think of defence; but at once his high look sunk before her, and he said, in a very altered manner, "Maria, I will never attempt to oppose you when you have truth and religion, as well as every good feeling, on your side. My own feelings were those of a triumphant brute until I was brought back to my humanity by my remembrancer."

"No, no!" interrupted Maria. "Not so; but our best feelings must be kept in check as well as our worst, otherwise they lead to error." She added, "surely he who hourly risks his own life to save another's, cannot deserve to be called a brute?"

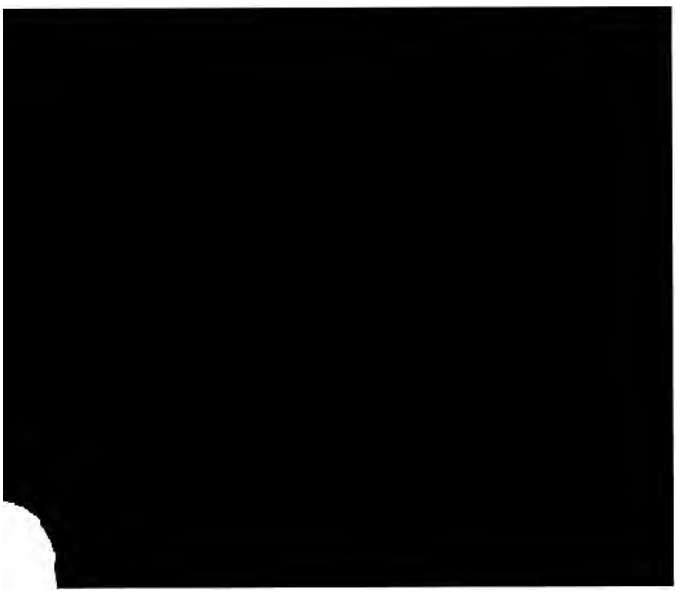
"Why not? a dog would do it."

"True! but although a dog's attachment and courage would carry him so far, we cannot know that he would be aware of all he hazarded."

"Fie, Maria! libelling dogs? I will tell Lion."

"Poor Li!" said Maria, and looked quite pensive.

The wonder that was then expressed may easily be imagined; but none of the conjectures served to account for the dog's appearance in any thing approaching to a satisfactory manner—and it never has been accounted for to this hour. It still remains a wonder how the animal could have found them out after they had been gone so many days: but the fact is undoubted,—is historical. What a pity that he lived before our times! or, of course, he would have kept a journal, which, appearing as a handsome quarto, would have told us all his travels and adventures!



instantly told him was "all for love;" but for fear of what followers he might have.

Lion sprung upon the lady as she was in the act of rising, and nearly threw her down; but never did poor beast show greater joy—it quite exceeded Maria's, although she, when her astonishment was a little over, kissed and hugged him as hard as she was able. He mouthed, and licked, and scraped, and caressed her; and when she, with her arms about his neck as she knelt upon the ground, said, "Li- poor, dear Li!" he sat down sturdily upon his hinder part; and with his fore legs firm set in the ground, bolt upright, and nose in the air, he gave that howl which in a dog speaks the fulness of delight. Maria could hardly help howling too.

When Maria and Lion had thus mutually expressed their feelings, Montfort made a circuit round their station, to convince himself there were no enemies near, for he feared lest the dog's instinct should have been made use of to trace out his mistress; but he found that all was safe.

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When their confusion was over, and they felt quite re-assured, Maria said, "I have not yet introduced you to Li;" for Montfort, although he had occasionally seen him about the Court, in no inconsiderable capacity either—that of her Majesty's pet!—had never actually made his acquaintance; which, indeed, shows what a bad courtier he was. Why, I have known the crabbedest cur flattered into a good opinion of itself,

until it gave itself the airs of a Newfoundland dog. Maria held out his great paw to Montfort, which made Lion stare; though having been brought up with well-bred people, when it was shaken, and he was patted, he did not growl or bite. Montfort said, "Now, Maria, you *must* feel yourself safe! now you have two protectors!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Maria, and made a full stop, in something like confusion. The remainder of this sentence is nearly as great a mystery as the appearance of Lion himself, for all Montfort's persuasion could not induce her to advance one bit in it. Some of the commentators have hazarded a conjecture that it was intended to have been finished thus: "Oh that both were equally attached and faithful!" Now the only reason I have for being of their opinion is, Maria's protesting so earnestly that she did not know what she was going to say! but whatever the truth might be, this I know, that, in reality, of the two she would rather have doubted the dog than the man, notwithstanding the proof the former had just given,

which may seem ingratitude, but is nevertheless truth.

I don't want to make Maria out one bit better than she was, and shall therefore acknowledge, that when she now got up to offer the dog some meat, having first broken in upon Montfort's persuasions by saying, "O! perhaps poor Li is hungry!"—it was from a mixed motive, partly from kindness, and partly to elude his pertinacity. Lion however, it is to be supposed, must have made free with a good dinner somewhere on that day, for he would not eat any thing, although his general appearance was that of a dog that had undergone a great deal of fatigue: he therefore did not assist Maria much in her extremity; but (which did assist her) Montfort perceived she wished him to drop the subject;—and he did so.

When Maria sat down again, the monster stretched himself out at full length, and laid his enormous head in her lap; nor could all Montfort's coaxing tempt him to leave his situation, which he wished him to do for fear the weight should

annoy Maria after all her fatigue. His attentions were acknowledged as far as a look, and beating his great tail against the ground, went; but no further.

Maria had often talked to Montfort about her favourite, and once made a speech, that Montfort's good sense made him think beautiful simplicity and nature, but which a less sensible person might have thought an extraordinary one. "I dare say," said she, "you will think my attachment to that poor beast very absurd; but you must recollect my situation. My father away from me; and those who were immediately round me, keeping me at a distance from them in their feelings, because there was a difference in our stations—I had nothing, therefore, near me to feel attachment for except poor Li; and you know it is necessary to love something."

This former blank in Maria's bosom having been filled up, did not, however, seem to bring Lion at all into disgrace.

Montfort now brought back the conversation to what they had been talking of before it was so strangely interrupted. It may be that he liked to be lectured by Maria; and certainly it struck him that she looked very pretty when she was doing so, and perfectly in place.

"Then, Maria," he began, "you think me fully justified in what I did?"

"Perfectly," said she. "I am quite easy on that point. And I will further own, that if women are ever fit to decide on such subjects, it must be when they do not see them acted. Their feelings must not be appealed to, or their judgment is lost. Are we not a weak set?

"Now you cannot, Maria, really expect me to agree to that speech after what I have seen to-day; and it is useless for you to say you do so, for I will not believe you."

"Well, I do not mean weak in every thing; but although woman may be able to bear and to suffer, it does pass her comprehension to

know how man can keep his judgment clear, and act on it in such emergencies. You *are* a mystery!"

"I should be sorry if woman really thought so, for in that which is mysterious, there is always something we dread; and what we dread, we dislike."

"You have come to a very logical conclusion; but how can it be the true one, when what I say is certainly correct? and yet God has made us to love each other. But I deny that we dread, and therefore dislike, all we cannot fathom. There are mysteries which delight as well as those which affright us. Look at that," said she, plucking a wild flower and holding it up to him, "is not that a mystery?"

"Or, at that," said Montfort, totally giving up his bad argument, and taking up her idea as he pointed to the first star that just came showing forth and warning them it was time to go to rest.

"Or," returned Maria, "at this poor animal's

instinct and attachment! are they not beautiful and mysterious?"

Montfort was never in a less fit mood to deny the beauty and mystery of attachment of any sort.

During all this conversation one might have thought Maria quite happy. Montfort's arm was now perfectly easy; she had had a weight taken off her mind by being quite convinced of the propriety of shooting a man; she had got her pet, and they felt themselves safe from pursuit in their present situation; but still she had something to teaze her. With all her power over him, she did not know how to prevail on Montfort to wrap himself up in the cloak, and try to get some sleep while she watched; and although she put on her most persuading look, she utterly failed when she attempted it. To all her arguments about his requiring sleep, he had arguments just as good to offer; and he being both judge and defendant in the cause, Maria had very little chance of gaining it.

"But, from the pain you have suffered, your loss of blood, and the fatigue you have been obliged to undergo since,—you require rest more than I do," pleaded Maria, with an earnestness which I wonder how Montfort's heart could have withstood. It wouldn't, but that on the other side, in his mind's eye, there was the same beautiful form suffering and drooping from over-exertion and want of sleep, which pleaded still stronger. He looked at the real young lady, and said, "Can I refuse her any thing?" He looked at the ideal young lady, and said, "Yes, I can." He therefore replied, "But from your want of man's strength, and from the harassing and dreadful scenes you have gone through, you require rest more than I do."

Montfort was obliged at last to enforce his authority by saying, "You know, Maria, you promised, not long ago, to be guided by me in every thing."

"O! so I must, to be sure. But then, you will allow me to persuade?"

For a short time Maria—all I have said about her contentment to the contrary notwithstanding—kept herself awake from fretting; but then she began to think, "He is easy now, and at all events resting; and in a few hours he will be asleep, and I shall be watching him. The night is so mild, too, that I do not think his arm can really take any injury; but that is no excuse for his obstinacy," muttered she, relapsing into a little rage at the recollection; "and so I'll tell him in the morning!" But I must own that the speech ended with—"God preserve and bless him!—dear, dear Montfort!—How I do——Heigh ho!" and hardly had she finished saying what she called "her little prayer," —a child's prayer for protection during sleep, which she had been taught at that early age, but never could fix upon a proper time to leave it off—when she slept, and dreamt,—but what have I to do with young ladies' dreams? It is quite as much as I can manage to follow the flight of their thoughts when they are awake; their dreams are far beyond me. My own are sometimes wild

Maria had been obliged, on account of his wound, to collect and make her own bed; but whether it was that she did not understand it, or whether it was that she could not sleep without the hand she loved doing something for her, when she lay down, after they had said their usual prayers with more than usual fervour, she asked Montfort to raise her ferny pillow a little, or to press it down —she did not exactly know which; and when he had given it a shake that could not have made the slightest difference either one way or the other, she was quite satisfied, and turned round on it with such an air of content as if there were now nothing earthly which could make her more comfortable.

Alack! I have gone far beyond this little simple trick of Maria's, although it was the best she could think of: I have purposely got my young hands full of thorns, that the sweetest fingers in the world (a little younger than my own) might take them out for me; and well do I remember that touch even at this very hour.

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enough! But, sleeping or waking, there did not breathe a lovelier, or a better, in all this beautiful creation, although the Creator had now seen fit to plunge her into trials.

Whatever the dreams of the sleeper might be, those of the waker were very visionary,—"exceeding fantastical—too, too vain," as Don Armado has it. Although not quite like that other Don, hight Quixote, who could spend months in profound meditation on his mistress's charms, Montfort yet did spend this night in fancies full as out of the way as the most extravagant of the knight's; which had one good effect—it made the time pass so quickly, that when morning came, he could hardly believe it was morning; and Juliet herself was not more ready than he to declare the lark to be the nightingale. It seemed to Montfort he had just sat down and thought a little—a very little—about Maria, and had not stolen to see if she was sleeping well much more than a couple of dozen times, when up sprung the god of day, like a young giant.

But before this time had arrived, the lover, as

in duty bound, had likened her to, and associated her with, the heavens in all their variety. The moon went to bed in the shape of a crescent, clear and beautiful. That, of course, was Maria all over. "But does she shine on all alike? Or has she an Endym——?" Before he could get out the rest of the long name, he gave his head that sort of shake, or twitch, which we do give when we would shake an impertinent thought out of it. Then Maria was made a planet—Venus, of course. Even the clouds did not escape, for one had its edges beautifully silvered. But when the dawn came on, his brain began to fume like a bottle of champagne. "Ah! I have seen colours more radiant, yet more soft, play over a face to which the heavens themselves must yield in beauty, and one which speaks the wonders of the Creator still more than they." Here, fortunately, he thought of his pledged word, and, well knowing it would be exacted to the uttermost, he in a very altered tone growled forth, "She is a little tyrant, after all! and I must not be a moment behind the time, if I ever expect to hear the last of it."

To be obliged to disturb the sleeping girl was really distressing. The most hard-hearted person in the world feels some compunction at waking from a sound sleep even one who is indifferent to him. The most unreflecting does so far reflect, "There he lies, enjoying a positive good! and who can dare to say he will awaken mortal man, and that it shall not be to sorrow—to taste the bitter cup before he sleeps again?" Why, I have even felt compunction at calling another to take my place on watch; not that I can recollect any well-authenticated case of my ever having remained there myself in preference to doing so.

It was now within a few minutes of the time. "But why," says a little whipper-snapper gentleman in a blue coat with yellow buttons—"why, if he was so loth to wake her, did he go to her before the last moment?" Ah! I should have known he was not a lover who made that speech, without seeing his blue coat with yellow buttons. After having looked at his watch once more, to prevent the possibility of being too soon, Montfort,

finding there was still at least a minute to spare, had of course nothing else to do but to look at Maria. She was sleeping with her face upon her hand, and her under cheek was pressed forward so much by it, that it pouted out her lips as if they were in the act of kissing. Ye gods! what would he have given! Her bosom too, though hid in man's apparel, was seen to move more than man's—it rose and fell as of a calm moonlight night I have seen the gently swelling waves of the Mediterranean—not as if propelled by each other, but seemingly lifted up and expanded by a power within themselves. As he hung over her, the sweet pouters began to murmur: he thought he heard his own name amidst half-drawn sighs. It was too much! human nature could bear it no longer! Like the monarch of the skies, he pounced upon his helpless prey, and —— gave her a nudge!!!

This hardly sounds sufficiently romantic for the occasion; and under other circumstances I have no doubt Montfort would have managed things

much better. Perhaps he would have put his face as close to Maria's as he could with any decency, and have "breathed her name," (I think that's the term; but, to be sure, I'll ask my cousin Lydia,) in a voice as soft "as summer's noon-tide breeze," or that in which Bottom promises to roar so as not to frighten the ladies. But he really did not care to trust his lips one inch nearer to her: he felt that he could not be answerable for their conduct.

But although the act might have been unromantic, not so were his ideas: he did not forget to think of angel gentleness, peaceful slumbers, innocent repose, and whatever is right and proper on such an occasion.

Maria half awoke instantly; but the still drowsy girl said, without knowing exactly what she was about, "Is it time?"—"No, Maria, it is not time for you to get up—but it is four o'clock. Will you sleep a little longer?" "Indeed, I won't!" replied "Gentleness" quite snappishly, jumping off the bed in a rage, "and it is the most unreasonable thing in the world for you to ask me!" "What!

this my peaceful slumberer of a moment ago!" thought Montfort: and he laughed as he took her hand, and said, "Tell me, Maria, did you ever awake in a pet before in your life?" Maria replied, rubbing her eyes, and yawning, and laughing at the same time, "I never before had so much cause!—that I'm sure of! But," with a start that showed she had only at that instant come to her full consciousness, she exclaimed, "How is the arm?" and she dropt both her own by her side like a soldier suddenly coming to "attention."

"*The* arm!" Montfort liked the phrase—almost as much as "my wounded monkey." "Your arm," would have sounded common-place and cold: but there was an individuality (so he called it—I hardly know what he meant,) about *the* arm which he liked. It was next door to "my arm! my own arm!"

"No! I would rather have it done when I get up. But mind, Maria, wake me to the minute. I have done so to you."

"Yes," replied she, "you have been very good this once:" and she proceeded to make out her own case as well as she could, talking herself half out of breath, as a young lady is apt to do when intent on not giving you an opportunity of saying "no" before you have been forced to listen to all her reasons—"yes, you have been very good for once, and I 'll call you, of course, at any hour you name; but I do think you might sleep a little longer than usual to-day, because it is impossible we can travel very far at all events; and indeed we shan't lose any thing by your resting longer, as you will be so much stronger, and therefore better able to travel when we do begin, and so shall I; and I really feel on my own account it would be better to stay here until late,—and you know there is no danger of our being discovered, and we have plenty of provisions, and it will do the arm so much good,—and then Li——." Heaven knows what she was

going to say about Li, or how long her tongue would have run on now it was once fairly set a-going! I think it would hardly have stopped yet, had not Montfort, from sheer desperation, managed to edge in, "not one moment after eight o'clock!" "I'll take care you shall never be wounded again," said she; "it makes you so cross and ill-tempered."

"That 's very hard!" replied Montfort.

"At all events, not in my defence if *I* can help it!" she added, smiling; and continued, "Well, make haste and go to sleep, and have pleasant dreams."

"Then I know who I must dream of," thought Montfort.

When Maria had jumped off her bed so suddenly, up bounced Lion also, though not exactly in such a rage; which Montfort was glad to see, as he felt she would be so much safer with such a guardian beside her while he slept. To prove him, however, he said, as soon as the above conversation was over—"Come, Li, lie

down again!" and put his hand upon the bed.

"No," replied Li; "it is *our* turn to watch now," —that is, the look he turned from Montfort to Maria, and the shake he gave himself, said every word of it.

Montfort felt quite compunctious; for, in truth, he had done the noble beast some wrong. It was in this matter:—When he gave Maria that nudge, which is now more celebrated than ever was nudge before, he observed that Lion kept his eyes fixed upon him, but did not attempt to interfere, to make him let her alone. "Oh," thought Montfort, "I see I must not trust her too much to your care."

A little "compunctious visiting" is very wholesome now and then; and Montfort's made him consider that dogs distinguish between love and hate as soon as the lordly biped himself; and he could easily believe that, as he bent over Maria, the penetration even of a donkey might have gone so far as to discover he had no intention of cutting her throat.

Maria was, in general, quite as great a visionary as Montfort, and the castles which she built, had, I grieve to say for her sake, as slight foundations; if indeed, they deserved the name of castles, they being so much more in the cottage style—the "contentment is wealth" style—than even his. Let not ignorant people say, "This is out of character in a queen." Alack! it is quite *in* character; for such is the contentment of human nature, that, when it gives the reins to fancy, it is generally to imagine itself the very opposite of what it is—at least so says Rasselas, from whom, now I think of it, I have certainly stolen this fine-sounding sentence.

But at present Maria did not seem to build many edifices of any sort, perhaps from being too busy; for she had many things to do—to make her toilet, say her prayers, and get breakfast.

Luckily Montfort had managed to procure a great piece of common soap: this was between them. They had a tooth-brush each, but their comb was a joint-stock. Maria now paddled in a stream for

half an hour, and made herself quite comfortable: she then said a prayer, which she might have thought too long before she had felt so "much need of blessing;" but since she had been plunged in danger, and wandering in doubt and dread, she did not find praying to be a trouble;—and this made her think, when she was examining her own sweet little mind, that she had formerly been very thankless and ungrateful for all the blessings bestowed upon her, and she said, "Truly I deserved and required that this misfortune should come upon me." O, Maria! Maria!—in spite of your making it out so very bad, would that you would give me your conscience when you have done with it, and that any body else had mine! I fear there is as much difference between them, as between that nice, white-looking sheet of paper at the other end of the table, and the blotty thing which I am making this!—But, bless me! this is quite against my usual maxim. I seldom compare myself to my neighbours, unless I have evidently the advantage: then, indeed, I

think it a duty! But Maria's prayers—at lea
those she said to herself—must necessarily ha
been longer than they used to be; for she h
now to add one other name in them to that of h
father.



CHAPTER V.

he says nothing, Sir, but weeps and weeps."

SHAKSPEARE.

then made preparations for their morn-
l, which she laid out quite tastily under a
ld olive-tree, the only one that grew so
the hill, and which she looked forward
great pleasure. Alas! how was the poor
tined to be disappointed!
very delightful to sit and muse about those
, and to be perfectly useless: but it is also
ightful to be busy in their service; and so

Maria seemed to think, by the unnecessary fuss she made. But besides all this, I won't deny—why should I?—that she did, now and then, steal over to take a little peep at Montfort, just to see if he were really asleep, as, "poor fellow! his arm may be giving him pain, and preventing it." But then she did not go near so close to his bed as he had done to her's, and for two reasons. A certain something—I don't know what it is, but I believe it is called by those who do, "propriety of feeling," —told her she had no business there, when her services were not actually required, however much she might like it; and she was likewise afraid of her rough companion waking him; for Li, whose only affection, that for Maria, was a good honest dog-like one, but not a bit sentimental, did not understand such doings, and therefore used to bound forward when Maria approached Montfort, as if he thought she was going to rouse him. She consequently used the utmost caution; but, notwithstanding, was caught—caught in the very fact, and did look so foolish! Her confusion, however,

quickly gave way to a much more terrible feeling, when Montfort called her to him, and, in a voice of evident suffering, said, "Dearest Maria! let me entreat you not to alarm yourself, but I must tell you that I am in a good deal of pain; I believe I have caught cold in my arm." Maria was horror-struck, for she saw that his case was infinitely worse than he sought to make it out to her. All the desolation of their state struck upon her at once, and she sat down upon his bed with a face expressing as much agony of mind as his did of body, but did not speak a word.

"Dear, dear Maria!" repeated Montfort, when he got a little ease, "let me entreat you not to frighten yourself. For my sake do not do so, for you must be my support."

"What can I do for you?" said she, suddenly rousing; "shall I fly to the nearest village for help? But, O Heaven! to leave you alone!" And she hung her head again hopelessly.

"No!" replied Montfort, in a voice in which he tried to muster all his firmness. "But help me

to sit up, and you shall dress my arm, and that may relieve me."

The being thus employed seemed, by distracting her attention, to take off something from Maria's fears, the effect of which, at first, had been quite stunning: but the dressing gave no relief, and the pain increased, until it became as great as perhaps human nature can possibly bear, and yet live. I do not know what the Leeches call it, but I know it by more than name, for I felt it once— a spasm brought on from a wound being exposed to the cold air. When the pangs seized him, he started up in his bed in spite of his best efforts to the contrary. Then Maria held him in her arms, supported his head upon her shoulder, and wiped the cold drops from his forehead. After the paroxysm had passed, she laid him gently down again, and sat with his hand clasped tight in both of her's, as if each moment she dreaded to lose it, utterly insensible to the consolation and support which he, in the intervals between his attacks, sought to give her. But what consolation could

enter her soul when it was filled with the horrid idea of seeing him whom she loved,—her agony now told her how much,—die for want of help?

It were as easy to induce a savage, who had never before heard of gunpowder, to credit its effect, without giving him a proof of it, as to make those who know not love believe its mighty power. It is in vain to tell such, that in Maria's arms Montfort could have died happy in spite of his torments, but for the helpless state in which he must leave her. Equally vain is it to say, so absorbed was the wretched girl in her lover's fate, that she never once thought of the desolate situation in which she might be left, and of her almost certain captivity and death. Yet this is truth.

It was truly a piteous sight—not Montfort's sufferings, for that is the lot of humanity, and must be borne—but the sorrow of the wretched girl. To be obliged to sit and witness his torments, without the power of doing any thing towards relieving them,—to be forced to look on, and wait the result of a game played for a life infinitely dearer to her

than her own,—was almost beyond human endurance: unassisted, it would have been so. The rack was screwed to the utmost pitch of torture, and so kept; and nothing but her prayers sustained her under it.

After one most violent spasm, Montfort was so much exhausted that, to Maria's fears, he seemed dying; and she felt confirmed in this opinion, when he said faintly, and at long intervals—"Listen to me! If I go where we shall meet again, Maria, I charge you to leave this spot instantly. Take as much provisions as you can carry, and a brace of pistols; for the sight of them may be of use, and they will serve to keep up your disguise: that faithful creature will guard you from common dangers, and who knows but that he was sent on purpose? Recollect, my dear Maria, that if we are to part, this is my dying injunction, and do not dare to disobey it: leave this spot immediately afterwards, without attempting to do any thing but what I have told you; and God will be with his own child!"

When he had given further directions, he said,

"Maria, do you understand me?" But she only answered with fresh tears.—"Maria, think of my anxiety, and tell me if you understand what I have said."

"Am I to see him die?—am I to see him die? O God! is this my doom?" said the half-frantic girl, as she looked up with a bewildered stare, seeming really to expect an answer from above; but Montfort, with his little remaining strength, seized her arm; she saw, in his face, that agony of mind rose above his agony of body, and she was at once recalled to herself; all her violence had passed away, and she bent down and hid her face in his hand.

"Dear, dear friend!" said Montfort, feebly trying to draw her towards him—"I trust that God will not leave you without human protection; but it was my duty to say what I have said, in case he should see fit to do so;—but I feel better—I am easier since that last violent attack,—indeed I am! (Maria looked up, but it was incredulously.) I should not dare to say an untruth now, even for your sake."

Maria almost ventured to hope; but no!—the unearthly lustre of his eyes forbade it.

For two hours more Montfort lingered on, as it were, on the very edge of the precipice of death, from which another such attack would surely precipitate him; every throb, every quiver, being watched by Maria with such an agony of anxiety, that the very recollection of it afterwards was shrunk from as a hateful thing. At length her heart did really tremble into hope; and this ray of light, feeble and struggling as it at first appeared, proved a harbinger. His attacks did return, but each slighter than the former, and he now evidently gained strength in the intervals.

Montfort himself, also, now began to feel the hope he sought to give; but he was perplexed with other fears, which Maria did not think of: he knew that, if he survived, to travel, for many days, would be utterly out of his power; and exposure again to the night air might bring on a relapse.

When Montfort consulted Maria about what they were to do, real joy sprung once more into her

face, for it seemed to assure her that her hope was not a false one:—and this was his idea in mentioning it; for be it known, although Shakspeare himself talks of its simplicity, that love hath more wiles than the serpent; and Maria had the joy, too, of knowing, or thinking she knew, a remedy for what appeared to him such a difficulty.

"I saw," said she, "before you awoke, that we had stopped not very far from a deserted *châlet*: it cannot be more than a quarter of a mile off. I will run and see if we can get into it, and if it will afford us any accommodation."

But although Maria talked of running off instantly, she yet lingered, until Montfort thought she was afraid to go, and asked her if it was so.

"I have no fear but of leaving you. Oh! shall I not find you worse when I come back?"

"No! I am sure you will not," said Montfort, so cheerfully that it seemed to lift up her very heart. "But mind to see if there is a door."

Maria looked at him a moment longer, as if to

gain courage, and then started off with the speed of a deer, followed by Lion.

If ever poor beast felt for human sufferings, it was Lion during this heavy day. He would not lie down, but stood looking at the sorrowful pair: now and then, as Maria sat on Montfort's bed crying, he would go over and lay his head in her lap, but not as if to draw her attention to him, for he did not give the poke with his nose which he always gave on such occasions, but there remained quiet; or if Montfort's hand hung over the bed for an instant, he went and licked it. Sufferings lay the feelings bare; they are then easily got at. This act of Lion's brought tears into Montfort's manly eyes more than once, and he thought, as he feebly pressed the poor animal's head, that a few short hours, and her he loved might have no other protector.

Maria and her companion returned before Montfort thought they could have reached the *châlet*, from what he had been told of its distance; the former so out of breath that, until she had rested

for a while, the only words she could utter were, "Easy still?" To Montfort's "Perfectly!" pronounced in a way that there was no disbelieving, her up-turned eyes were her only reply. "Oh!" said she, as soon as she could speak, "Providence is good to us indeed! the *châlet* has a roof and door. There is a place for you to sleep on, and we shall be quite comfortable if you can only get there." Montfort felt almost inclined to smile, and he certainly did smile, to encourage Maria, at a young Queen's idea of comfort. Nevertheless, humble as the shelter was, the existence of both might depend upon it; and, therefore, it was duly appreciated.

"I shall certainly be able to get there with your help, Maria," said he.

"When will you go? Perhaps you had better rest here as long as you can, and move just before daylight closes."

"No! I think I had better go as soon as possible; I feel myself equal to it now, and then you will have plenty of time to add to all the comforts you talk of." Montfort's true reason—the fear

that his spasm might return, and prevent his going at all,—he did not mention. He was also anxious to make the attempt, as, until he did so, he could not really tell what chance he had of succeeding.

Maria now hastily completed what preparations were absolutely necessary to be made before they could start, and, amongst the rest, she contrived to make Lion's strength available, by tying one end of a sash round his neck, and the other round Montfort's waist,—so short, that the latter could rest his hand on the dog's back, whilst he was dragged on by him. But still his legs were obliged to do their part in bearing him up, and this they were very badly able to perform ; for, when he attempted to stand, he found his torments, joined to his previous loss of blood, had left him miserably weak. However, with a companion on each side of him, leaning on the one and being supported by the other, he could manage to totter a few paces at a time. As he went on, dragging one reluctant limb after the other, Maria said to him, "Do lean heavy upon me—do let me feel that I am of some use to you."

"Some use to me, Maria? I feel that my life will be saved, and I shall owe it to your care."

"Who," replied Maria, "brought it into danger? But you shall not talk!"

By sitting down to rest several times in the short distance they had to go, Montfort reached to within twenty yards of the *châlet;* but so thoroughly exhausted, that when he attempted to rise, in order to make his last effort, his legs refused to obey him. He now despaired of reaching the haven, notwithstanding it was so near them, for unless he could manage to keep himself up, all Lion's services would be thrown away.

But Maria did not despair, although the look she cast on him for a moment, when she found him totally unable to rise, seemed to say so. Desperation must have given her supernatural strength, for this slight, weak-looking girl took her now powerless charge up in her arms, and carried him the remainder of the way. Fortunately, she had insisted on preparing his bed before they moved, on which he sunk, almost fainting.

The cloud again gathered over Maria's beautiful brow at seeing Montfort so frightfully weak; which he observed, and, as soon as she had recovered him a little by sprinkling water on his face, said, "Maria, I have got over this exertion much better than I expected: I hardly thought I should have been able to accomplish it with all your help."

"I would have carried you all the way before night," said Maria, in that determined manner that showed at all events she would have attempted it.

"You would have done what no other girl in your place would have thought of doing, I know! but thank God, we are here! I feel stronger every instant. But you must promise me not to be frightened if my pain should come on again a little after this exertion. I am sure it will not be much if it does come."



regretted he had given her this unnecessary alarm.

After Maria had somewhat regained her composure, she said, as she surveyed their desolate hut with a look of content, "We shall be so comfortable here! But are you recovered enough for me to go for the remainder of the things?"

"Yes, quite enough! But let me entreat you to take time, and not to fatigue yourself, or run as you did before. You have full three hours of daylight yet—and recollect, Maria, your health is all that *both* of us have to depend upon now," replied Montfort, laying a great stress on *both*.

Maria professed an intention of being perfectly obedient, and gave a few excellent reasons why she certainly should go very deliberately to work: in fact, you would have supposed she meant to set up as a pattern of docility to all the mountain lasses; nevertheless, the moment she got outside the door, she ran off as hard as she could. She quickly returned, bringing the arms, and a small earthen

jar, which she had found in the *châlet*, full of water. Li marched stoutly before her, bearing the rest of their things tied upon his back, and seemingly very proud of his employment.

Before Maria left the spot they had slept at, she had thought enough to endeavour to efface all marks of their bivouac, in case any peasant should chance to come to that out-of-the-way place on account of the water; a thing, however, very unlikely to happen. Lion, notwithstanding all that is recorded of his wonderful sagacity, was out upon this occasion, for when he saw Maria pull about the grass, &c., he began to scratch a great hole, and had nearly made it big enough for a grave for either of them, before she perceived what he was about. All the commentators here acknowledge themselves to be quite unable to guess what the dog's intention could have been, which involves two of the most extraordinary circumstances recorded in history—first, that they should acknowledge themselves to be at a loss; and secondly, that they should be unanimous on any point.

When we feel called on to make great efforts, we have generally as little inclination as opportunity to give way to ideal miseries—to those which fancy alone shows us; but Maria's heart seemed to die within her for an instant, when the thought struck her, as she looked at the pit Li had made, "God only knows how near I was requiring this!" And then the true reason of Montfort's wishing her to quit the spot the instant he should die, came into her mind for the first time: "And did I promise to leave him exposed to the wild birds and beasts? But it would have been the fate of both; for I feel that I could not have outlived him—and you, poor beast! would have starved to death beside us." But quickly recovering, she said to herself in an altered tone, "This is shameful!" By which it appears she was fully aware she was at this time called on to show exertion, and not sentiment.

As soon as Maria returned, she wrapped the cloak round Montfort, in spite of some slight resistance, telling him, when he demurred to the

proceeding, that she had a contrivance for their covering during the night, which she knew was what he thought of.

Maria had found, in the hut, many things which were, or might be made, real treasures to them under their present circumstances. She first pulled out three sacks in tolerable repair; then the pitcher caught her eye; and at last she was made quite happy in the possession of a large lump of tallow, and some rope-yarn and rags. With these, and four large boards which the shepherds appeared to have used as beds, she felt quite set up in her house-keeping.

The *châlet* was just large enough to admit of their beds being laid against the walls at right angles to each other, meeting at the feet: Maria now added such a quantity of nice soft ferns to Montfort's, as to make it perfectly comfortable. In a few minutes more, she had collected a heap for herself, and another for Lion, which she placed in the angle between the beds. This done, she cut the best of the bags in two,

and by tying up the ends with some of the yarn, and filling them with the finest parts of the fern, she made a pillow for each, which really was a luxury. She then contrived a sort of torch, with a strand of yarn and a lump of tallow, but this was not to be lit except Montfort should be taken ill in the night.

"Now," said Maria, "I will tell you my plan about the cloak. Whatever I might say, I know you would not keep it all—neither will I;—so you need not begin to talk! But I mean to manage it in this manner," continued the little dictator—"I will nearly fill the two remaining sacks with leaves, and into these we must put our legs, to keep them warm: then I will cut the cloak in two parts, for half of it will be sufficient to complete the covering of each, and when we are going away I can sew it together again, as I have got a needle and thread."

Before the sun had set, Maria had finished all her work, and Montfort felt so much revived that he asked to sit up, and even to be allowed to go

to the door of the hut, to look at their situation; for, it may be supposed, he had not made many observations on it when they arrived. After demurring to this only as long as a doctor generally thinks fit to do to any request of a patient—and also, perhaps, to show her authority—Maria wrapped the cloak more carefully about him, and led him to the door. He felt quite confirmed in what she had told him about the security of their station: it seemed almost impossible for them to be approached from below in the dark, and nearly as improbable that any one should come along the ridge, as they had done.

Montfort was much pleased with their situation, and said, "With such a stout-hearted ally as you, Maria, I could defend this spot against a host."

The evening was so beautiful, and the soft air so refreshing, that Montfort was foolish enough to beg to have their supper outside the door: but Maria was too anxious and too prudent to think of permitting it; and, indeed, could she have

mustered sufficient spirits to have done so, she would have given him a scolding for allowing such an idea to enter his head.

In the short time Montfort had been permitted to sit at the door, Maria had swept up the leaves, &c., from the floor, with a broom of her own contriving, had ranged the arms in reach of his bed, had laid out their supper, and made their hut look comparatively cheerful.

"You have done wonders! It was almost a pity to spoil so good a housewife by making her a queen!" said Montfort, as she brought him in, expecting, if the truth must be told, some little commendation for her notableness.

When Maria had propped Montfort up in his bed in a comfortable position, she gave him his supper, which, on account of his wound, was confined to bread and fruit and water, and took her own;—nor was Li forgotten: the latter was the only one of the party who entered on the business with becoming seriousness; for pain had taken away all appetite from Montfort, and fright

from Maria. Nevertheless, they did eat a little, to try to deceive each other, as neither had tasted a morsel before for the day.

And now, when their meal was finished, and Maria had dressed his arm for the night, they sat awhile in silence: a languor had come over the minds lately so harassed, akin to the fatigue the body feels after over-exertion; but it truly was with them, though in a different sense, "a living languor that is not repose," or, at least, a starting and a feverish repose, and more broken in upon, in their case, from the dread of a relapse, which both still dreaded, although they did not speak of it.

By degrees, however, the stillness and soft beauty of the evening quieted down their minds, and the gratitude they felt for their shelter further disposed them to peace: the faded but yet glowing light—faded enough to add to its purity, but hardly to take from its warmth—came into the hut through the door-way; and as Maria sat upon Montfort's bed, between him and it,—her

airy figure in relief upon the western sky,—she looked so perfectly the being a sick poet would "body forth" to be his guardian spirit, that, to a lover's fancy, it might well seem her native element, from which she had just alighted to cheer his fainting hopes.

This exalting of the person we love is great happiness; but to Montfort it was not unmixed, for, the more he dwelt on Maria's perfections, the more did the distance between them seem to increase in every way; and if it did not cause him, like Miranda, to "weep for his unworthiness," it made him feel almost inclined to do so.

It cannot be denied that Montfort was always sufficiently alive to Maria's attractions; but the thought, "that he had never before seen her look so beautiful, in spite of her disguise," came into his head at this moment with all the force of novelty.

But she did in truth look more lovely, and it was because she looked more conscious: the knowledge—the perfect knowledge—that her

wildest wish was granted in its wildest extent,—that she was beloved even as her warm and fond young heart desired,—lit up her face with beauties which had never before appeared even there; and the tide of joy rushed on unchecked, because he had not told her of his love—because he had not forfeited her esteem in showing his affection: yet she knew it a thousand times better than if he had.

When Montfort remarked this sudden change in Maria's appearance, he accounted for it in his own blundering way.—"She is obliged to look me so directly in the face, from the position in which she sits," thought he, "that it would be awkward for any girl; especially for her, as she is not yet quite reconciled to her dress."

But, although he thus settled it, that her turning her back upon him would make all the difference in the world, he did not give the most distant hint upon the subject; and, as to her dress, I can inform him, that for four and twenty hours Maria had never thought of it,

nor did she think of it again in the light he supposed; but, once or twice afterwards, when she happened to spy her figure in the water, as she was stooping down to drink, and remarked that the dress was really pretty and very becoming, she said, as she eyed herself with complacency, "Oh! he was quite right to make me put it on!"

CHAPTER VI.

" Glow'd
Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue."
MILTON.

THE cause of Maria's conscious looks lay a little deeper than Montfort's speculations went; but I fear I shall blunder quite as much as he did if I attempt to meddle with them. I feel in a most metaphysical confusion already: I cannot account for them by saying " Maria recalled to mind,"



said to have been out of her mind for some time; —but perhaps an idea may lie dead there when the mind is not prepared to receive it, as the easiest quickening seed will remain unproductive if cast upon the rock. And surely seldom has the soul of mortal been less prepared for the approach of joy, than was that of Maria when the knowedge broke upon her which now exercised such power over her; for although she has appeared amidst violent scenes as a very pretty specimen of a heroine, she was still coward enough to have her senses in utter confusion: when she wanted them to tell her how to act, she seemed to be able to seize them; but at other times they were in a perfect maze.

In her tossed soul, then, this knowledge was like the beautiful water-lily in a stormy mountain lake: whilst the winds are high and the waves are rough, it is lost in the angry foam; but, as soon as the calm returns, it lifts its fair head again in all its freshness.—Or it was nature's most fairy rider of the waves—the nautilus: if the sea is torn and vexed, it strikes its tiny sail, and ships

its oars, and sinks to be at rest; but, when the strife is passed, it once more spreads itself to the breeze, and bounds joyously along.

But, as people must be finding fault, it may be asked, "Why did the recollection strike her so forcibly at this moment, as her violent fears had left her some time before?" which shall be duly answered, when they tell me why my own treat me so capriciously;—why some, that have no business there, so obstinately take possession of my mind; whilst others, which on every calculation ought to occupy it, will not do so;—why those, long buried, start into life when least expected, in all their original force and truth; and why they depart as suddenly, leaving me no power to call them back—"come like spirits, so depart!"

But although I may not be able to account satisfactorily for Maria's beautiful blushes, which I knew I should fail in, I can describe that which caused them.

There it lay, coiled up round, like a viper—"a viper," Maria vowed, "that shall never sting

him." There it lay nestled like a babe and cradled upon the dearest rocking-place—upon that heart which would not give it up for any thing else in the world, "except," Maria thought, "the head it came from!—But it may never come to that head again! Well, may not that head go to it?" and it was this last idea that did great part of the mischief.

I fear Maria's raving, however, will never explain to my reader what it was she saw. It was that lock, every hair of which she could have sworn to as her own, that Montfort had so basely purloined when cutting off her tresses, and which rose in judgment against him—that is, which discovered his crime; and what is far more, the cause of it,—his love. Maria had perceived it when helping off his coat to bind up his wounds.

It may be thought Maria was not slow to recognise her property, or hard to be convinced of the meaning of its being there. It never entered her head to suppose it had tumbled into his bosom by accident. In love, as in jealousy, "trifles light

as air," are "confirmation strong as proof of holy writ."

But Montfort would never have guessed at this cause to account for the glowing cheeks before him: he had closed his waistcoat as quick as thought, and was perfectly sure that at the moment it was open, Maria was looking in quite the opposite direction. In fact, he saw her head turned directly the other way.

Poor foolish man! He did not know that a woman's eyes can see any thing which tells her that she is beloved, whether it happens to be in sight or no! but as for this, Maria had ample time to view it and consider it in all its bearings, and ponder and muse upon it; and after that, not being particularly anxious to count the number of hairs he had purloined, she turned leisurely away. It was sufficient for her to know that it was there.

Maria before felt all but certain that she was beloved, but this hardly made the assurance of it less welcome: "making security doubly secure," is not thrown away in love, whatever it may be in

any other case. If every breeze that passes were to tell the same sweet tale, it would not be too often told—it would never be looked on as a "twice-told tale."

When Maria, sitting on her lover's bed, where we left her some few pages back, felt her cheeks getting a little too much like the glowing sky without, her ruffled thoughts naturally took refuge in that region where all is calm. "Can we be too thankful for this mercy, my friend?" said she, as she cast her eyes round their desolate habitation, with far more grateful looks than she had ever thrown upon the gilded walls of her most splendid palace.

Now my reader very well knows, that bare shelter, four boards, and a little pitcher—not to say a word about the rags and lump of grease—were all that Maria had at this moment to excite her gratitude. These may seem humble "things to thank God on," but what might not be their effect? —the saving of the life of him, without whom life would be a living death! and this help to be within reach at a moment when they looked for nothing less.

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not at that moment amongst the number. "Can we be too thankful for this mercy?" said she.

"That we cannot be, Maria. Oh!" continued he to her, as if he were addressing a higher order of being—"Oh! do thou teach me to be thankful enough!"

"He alone can do that!" said the lovely enthusiast, pointing her finger to the skies. "Let us ask it of Him!"

If ever incense arose pure and warm from the human heart, it was there. Earthly passions both had—passions now so strong, that either would far rather have sacrificed life, than sacrificed them—but were their hearts less pure on their account? Let not him who would not insult the being who placed them there, dare to say so! Let him not dare to say, that he who built the temple had defiled it by kindling so pure a fire upon the altar!

When their prayers were over, Maria still sat talking—not much, her heart was too full for that, but impressively. "Oh!" said she, "if God has

granted my prayers—if your pain does not return, I will take such care of you, that in a week you shall be as strong as ever."

"A week? I trust in three or four days, at furthest, for our provisions will not last longer."

"Well!" returned Maria, her beautiful eyes kindling until they seemed to light up the hut, and looking as if she thought nothing too great to be undertaken in such a cause, "do you suppose I shall be afraid to go to get more? I thought of going to the nearest village to-morrow."

Montfort looked aghast. It was quite unnecessary for him to say, "In Heaven's name for what?" for his face expressed it so plainly that Maria answered it.

"Why, to see if I could not get some better dressing for your arm."

"I never will agree to it. You shall not go: nothing can be better for my arm than the way it is now treated. Promise me, solemnly, Maria, that you will not attempt to do so without my consent."

"Do you suppose," said she, reproachfully,

"that I would think of such a thing? Do you imagine I would act so cruelly, or attempt to act at all without your advice precisely at the moment I should require it most?"

Montfort had laid hold of a part of Maria's dress as he spoke; not surely expecting thereby to prevent her leaving him, but from a similar impulse to that which makes us stretch out our arms towards a mail-coach, or even a three-decker if she is bearing away from us a being that we treasure—an impulse as expressive of our feelings, as ill-suited to effect their object. He now sought to withdraw his hand unseen, as he said, "I beg pardon, dear Maria! for being so very absurd; but where we are so anxious——"

But the action, though slight, had been observed, and Maria spoke with perfect sincerity, when she completed the meaning of his sentence by saying, "Yes! in such a case I can allow for one's being very silly." She added, "but let me entreat you not to agitate yourself in your present state with any more such fancies. Is it necessary

for me to tell you that I will not do any thing you seriously do not wish me to do ?"

"No, no, Maria! and I will not listen to such speech from you."

Maria felt inclined to yet linger by her lover's side. An indistinct dread hung over her, which made her almost fear to go to bed, lest on waking she should find that her hopes had been a dream, but her horrors realities. She thought, however, that it was now time for Montfort to try to get some sleep, and she could not be so selfish as to let her own wishes stand in the way.

We are strange beings! (By the way, I believe this observation has been made once or twice before, but I can't help making it again, on this occasion.) We are strange beings! The confiding girl—she who had such a holy trust in her lover—felt something like a sense of shame come over her, as she laid her hand upon the door to shut herself up with him for the night. Foolish girl! what had she to—not fear—she would have spurned at the idea of fear—but what had her



delicacy to shrink from? Had she not heavenly guards around her—God, her own innocence, and true affection?

She hesitated so much, that Montfort observed it; and, fancying something had alarmed her, said quickly, "What's the matter?"

"Nothing!" replied Maria, laying such an emphasis on the word, that it seemed to set her perfectly at ease. We sometimes gain courage from the determined manner we set about doing that respecting which a little doubt did previously remain upon our minds.

After this, they only spoke on one subject more. Maria said, "I shall not feel confident enough to go to sleep, unless you promise to wake me on the instant if you should have any pain during the night."

"If that is all that will keep you awake, you shall sleep sound enough. Upon my honour I will do so."

"Thank you, and God preserve you! Good night."

"God bless you, Maria!"

But although Maria thus insinuated that she was likely to go to sleep, she did not really think so. She was, however, mistaken; for the exhaustion of this terrible day, joined to its soothing close, and an hour's silent thankfulness on her pillow that it had so closed, sent her sweet soul to the land of dreams, whither, she heard by his breathing, Montfort had betaken himself before.

And here I must beg to inform my reader that I have been serious for one whole day! How could I be otherwise, with my Maria in agony and tears?—and Montfort, whom I cannot dislike, because he loved her so much, in pain and danger? But, nevertheless, 'tis against my nature, and I must be allowed to laugh as much as I please to-morrow, to make up for it.

But no! I shall not be able to laugh to-morrow, for I shall want some one to laugh with me, and neither Maria nor Montfort could do so until the next day: the most they could sport was a smile—a smile, too, that showed the scenes they had so

lately gone through had as little passed from their feelings as from their memories.

When that morrow came, and Maria awoke after a long sound sleep, she did not feel one bit snappish as she had done twenty-four hours before.

I do not conceive Montfort deserves any credit whatever for his amiability on waking; for, although, from the silence of the hut, he thought Maria must be still asleep, he found watching him a pair of eyes that seemed especially made to control all evil feelings. Quiet as a mouse, and watchful as a cat, Maria sat as if ready to pounce on him the moment he stirred;—nevertheless her action was not the least like a pounce when it did take place; but the instant his eyes were open, she was beside him without seeming to have made a single effort to get there; both her hands were placed in his, but the only word she uttered was—"Well?"

If he neither pressed the dear hands to his lips or to his heart, the tremor that slightly shook him as he spoke showed what his wishes were. What he said I am not aware, but I know that, if

Maria's eyes hardly continued to watch
less constantly during the livelong day
was without there being any very deep trac
anxiety in them; and they *did* watch him
Montfort almost wished the girl would shut t
What a pity it is that Tom Moore has been n
sun-flower before me!—"The sun-flower turns o
God," &c. would have been such a very pretty
appropriate simile! But I must not meddle w
now,—no, no—"Honour among thieves"—or p

And now Montfort was exposed to a dang
another sort from that of yesterday. But
danger, where danger had done its worst,
there was nothing left to be lost? Of Ma
conduct—of her tears—her affliction during
illness, the memory, however delightful, migh
confused; but respecting the impression that da
had left on her features there could be no mist
There was a fixed, an unchanging paleness;
a scared and frightened look remained, even w
she smiled. He could not disguise from h
self how deep the feeling must have been
left such traces: this was rather a hard ma

to get over on the score of gratitude; but, just as he was lapsing off into the blessed certainty that it must have been caused by a far different feeling, the thought came to his aid that it might have proceeded from anxiety about the situation she herself would be left in if he died. "But could self alone," thought he, "have thus affected one whose greatest danger seems to be, that she may forget self altogether? Nevertheless, philosophers say that self-preservation is the first law of nature. But then, to be sure," he added, with a satisfied smile, "they say a great number of silly things."

Montfort's smile proceeded from two causes:—the first, an idea flitted through his mind in the shape of a syllogism—"I am of human nature—I would rather preserve Maria than myself; therefore, self-preservation is not the first law of nature;"—the second, the recollection of a fair form bending before him to shelter him, at a moment that it might be death to do so, which seemed to tell him that he was not the only mortal

upon earth who could prove the philosophers to be wrong.

Soon, however, his smile passed away, and a most determined look came in its stead—"But I set that down to gratitude then," said he, "and why should I think differently now? I won't."

Of all the mighty powers of love, I am by no means that the greatest is not that which it sometimes possesses of deceiving itself. I profess to make others believe just what I please, whenever I have an object worth the trouble, and I am never surprised at being able to do so; but I must confess I have, on reflection, sometimes been astonished at what I have made myself believe. And now, although the case was quite a clear one, Montfort at last so mystified himself, that he seemed to say, "The true light, whatever it is, shall not come in upon me;" and unaccountable though it may seem, he did remain in darkness, or in a sort of twilight, through the glimmerings of which he could fancy that he did see, or that he did not see, any thing, just as the mood led him. But

whatever his conclusion (in which, like that of Rasselas, nothing was concluded,) might have been, the mischief of gazing on Maria's face, and debating about it whilst it was thus marked, would have been quite the same. Never in such a case show useless obstinacy; do not in a similar situation try to resist further: when it comes to this, it is far wiser to fold your robe at once, in order to fall decently at your conqueror's feet. It looks better, and the finale will be exactly the same.

I have said that during this day Maria and Montfort could only smile; but once something so like a laugh did happen, that Maria when she thought of it, was quite surprised.

At night, after they had, considering the circumstances, sat up rather late, Montfort had the conscience, notwithstanding, to hint that he thought it too early to go to bed; but prudence, who often says disagreeable things, told Maria plainly that she had let her patient remain up too long already. She also felt a little sleepy herself, but that, of course, had nothing to do with it.

With a shake of the head, therefore, which by no means implied that she felt any pleasure in deny- ing Montfort's request, she said, "No, you must g to bed immediately. I am glad you taught me ho to refuse, for otherwise I think I should ha scrupled to do so, now that I have the power."

"Ah! but I never refused you any thing exce for your own good, Maria."

"And do we differ in that respect?"

Now his conscience being at this moment, might be expected, a little tender, would not pe mit him to tell an abominable story. He ther face changed the plan of attack, and said, "Bu

is such pleasure to have you at my mercy, that I may be tempted to keep you so if I can!"

"You must make haste then and think about it, for your nursing has made me half-well already."

Maria did not answer his last speech, but turned away hastily, under pretence of closing the door. To give the girl her due, she was very prudent, even in this respect, when she thought of it, and she did not choose to let him see her face whilst there was so much expressed in it.

By the way, it may be thought, because Maria had a prudent fit at this moment, that her constant watching of Montfort in the morning was to prevent his having an opportunity of remarking in her face the traces I spoke of, as she had observed his looks always sunk before hers. No such thing! Had she fancied he would have liked it, she would then willingly have shut her eyes, and have let him look at her for an hour together. How to account for this change in her I do not know, except on the principle of Acres' courage—that prudence comes and goes; but such was the fact: never-

theless it must be admitted that the pale che
was by far the more dangerous, although t
flushed might have been the more beautiful.

For my own part, I hate prudence. It is
pitiful, cowardly sort of virtue, and is almost su
to sneak out of the way precisely at the mome
it is most wanted: or if it attempts a stand, w
what ease does rage beat it down, ambition bl
it up, or friendship doff it aside? What chan
then, has it against love? and if when we are go
to commit ourselves it is never to be found, on
other hand, when we are likely to get on very v
without it, it is always obtruding its adv

theless it must be admitted that the pale cheek was by far the more dangerous, although the flushed might have been the more beautiful.

For my own part, I hate prudence. It is a pitiful, cowardly sort of virtue, and is almost sure to sneak out of the way precisely at the moment it is most wanted: or if it attempts a stand, with what ease does rage beat it down, ambition blow it up, or friendship doff it aside? What chance, then, has it against love? and if when we are going to commit ourselves it is never to be found, on the other hand, when we are likely to get on very well without it, it is always obtruding its advice. Were it, instead of this, a good, honest, staunch, bull-dog sort of thing, and would seize my worser passions by the nose, and pin them down, I would say something to it; but it is a yelping cur, that gives an irritating and unavailing bark, and then flies.

That Maria was not exactly of my opinion—did not exactly treat prudence as I intend to do for the future (I have had too much of it heretofore)

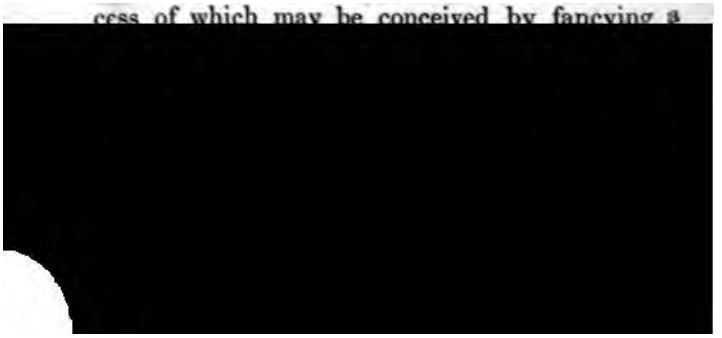
—discard it altogether—is evident, because mere inclination, if she had thought of nothing else, would have led her to give her helpless charge a kiss before he lay down to rest, instead of a simple "good night;" not, however, with a view of making him sleep sound, for she was not altogether so ignorant on the subject, as to guess that this would be its effect.

CHAPTER VII.

"So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent."

MILTON.

THE next morning, as soon as Maria had come a little to herself, she said, in a low whisper, "Are you awake yet?" fearing to disturb him should that not be the case; and she was immediately answered in a voice attempting an imitation of her own, "No, Maria, but are you?" the success of which may be conceived by fancying a



The delight, however, that a sound gives, does not always depend upon its sweetness. I recollect once making a trifling mistake between the music of the spheres and the grating of a carriage-wheel against the curb-stone—but then, to be sure, I knew who was to come forth out of that carriage. So with Maria now. She never before thought so little of "sweet souths" and "banks of violets." In fact, so completely did this harsh sound tell her all she wished, that she almost thought it unnecessary to ask him how he felt.

Maria then, like—

> "Morn,
> Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand
> Unbarr'd the gates of light,"—

that is, opened the door.

"It is really too bad!" said she, as she looked out; "why, the sun has been up for an hour at least."

"Quite shocking!" replied Montfort; "but may I not get up and enjoy the cool air?"

"I am almost afraid: I think it is too cool yet; and we *must* not run any risk. Will you wait until

I have made my toilet, and by that time it will be warm enough; then, whilst you are washing, I will put the house to rights, and get breakfast."

"Bless me, Maria! what can be the matter with you? Instead of, 'you must go to bed, and you shall do this, and you shall not do that,' we have nothing but 'will you?' and 'if you please.' I am afraid you are very ill."

"No! but you are very well! We are always inclined to be amiable when allowed to have our own way, and I ought to treat you well for obeying my commands in getting so much better."

"Then if I had happened to have been worse, I suppose you would have scolded me."

"No! I don't think I should have done that."

"Yes, you would! and had I been very ill indeed, I should have had the terrible fist I saw last night boxing my ears. However, as you are



Maria, having once got out, took care to stay until she thought it warm enough for Montfort to venture, as she knew there was no fear of his attempting to move until she returned,—that he should not do so, under such circumstances, having been one of the few rules they had found it of advantage to adopt whilst leading their strange life; and a strange life it must be allowed to be, although it is extraordinary how much of its strangeness had disappeared by this time, owing to there being true modesty and delicacy on both sides, but no fastidiousness on either. Montfort had all the delicacy of a lover, and Maria's modesty was of the sweetest sort; not that hedge-hog thing that is always bristling up against you, although your thoughts may be as chaste as Diana's,—but a trusting, a confiding modesty, "whose nature was so far from doing harm, that it suspected none." It was a modesty that even a coarse-minded man would have felt inclined to protect, because it so evidently depended on being thus treated.

But notwithstanding all my praise of Maria, I

must admit that she could sometime make herself as disagreeable as any young woman you ever met with. She was worse than a second conscience to one, for there was such an air of innocence about her, that in her presence you could not persuade yourself by any sophistry you were doing right when you were doing wrong—which may be considered a sort of ill-breeding on her part.

When they had at length changed places, and Montfort was at the stream, and Maria in the hut, the latter poked into a little place overhead which she had not before examined, and there discovered a tin cup, that from its smutty appearance had evidently been used over fire. "Oh!" said she, calling out to Montfort as loud as she could, in great delight, "I have found something that will do admirably well to boil your poultice in."

She received the gracious reply of "humph!" Supposing he could not have heard the intelligence which she fancied was to give him as much pleasure as it had given her, she repeated it: but a second "humph!" was all that she could get.

It struck Maria that her good news were by no means received as thankfully as it ought to have been, for which she could not exactly assign a satisfactory reason; but being very busy, she did not much try to do so, and went on with her work. However, she did afterwards remark, that, subsequently, when she used to dress his arm in a tidy, decent, christian-like way, he seemed comparatively uninterested about it, to what he had been when it was done in the much more primitive manner.

This "primitive manner" was such a neat finishing off of the last sentence, that the subject evidently should have ended there; but I must prolong it to say, that I could almost fancy the poor little unoffending cup to start back in a fright at the malignant look ontfort gave it when Maria at length came out, presenting it to him in triumph. Although he did not say so, he thought he had never seen so odious, ugly, ill-shaped a cup in his life. I would strongly advise it to keep out of his way, for, with a good big stone, and oppor-

tunity—that is, Maria's back turned—I would not answer for the consequences.

By the way, I have never said what the mouth which he, not unnaturally, preferred to this smutty utensil, was like. How could I, when there is nothing sweet enough on earth to compare it to, except other mouths, which I fear would not bring out the idea much. Besides, such comparison would be the means of making a pretty figure of Maria, as each man (for men will read this book in spite of all that I can say to the contrary) would naturally compare it to the lips he loves best. I, for instance, should say they were exactly like ——'s: then all who know her, would at once have a clear impression of this concentration of the beautiful. And this plan, in Europe generally, except amongst the "Finest Pisantry," who certainly are the *worst mouthed* people in the world, might answer well enough. But only fancy what a figure would be made of the poor girl when this history gets out amidst the black, and blue, and yellow-lipped damsels we read of! Some swain on

the banks of the Niger, when the genius of the march of intellect marches boldly up its banks, with my book in one hand, and the Penny Magazine in the other, would liken Maria's lips to his own Wowsky's. Now Wowskys may be very pretty in Africa, but I don't think they would exactly suit the rest of Maria's features. Then, in the South Sea Islands they would inevitably be tattooed in the most approved fashion, in a neat pattern, like a Manchester cotton. Oh! it will never do: I must let her mouth alone, and beg all who have no right to meddle with it, will do so too.

However, I do regret the loss of the formal description of the heroine in the novel of the by-gone day, which used to be given with as much creditable exactness as a tailor employs in taking a measure, and as carefully noted down—so many inches from the tip of the nose to the tip of the chin, &c. And then, for florid description, the account of all her wonderful qualities was only to be equalled by that of the showman enumerating those of the royal tiger—of which it used to put me so much in mind, that I always felt

inclined to say "Please, sir, to stir her up bit."

I do not, however, follow an example I so mu approve, because I cannot—that is, I cannot s ceed. Were I to give her dimensions to veriest fraction, how would that show her so which, nevertheless, was as plain to be seen lo ing from her face as is a housemaid looking ou an upstairs window?

But who could describe Maria now they gone—the two mighty ones—the bane and a dote of their age, Byron and Scott—he who tr with a giant's strength to drag us down to ear

ones ; and he whose steady fires, glorious as great, shone upon the gloomy abyss into which the other would have led us, warning us of our danger, and inducing us to shun it by making virtue herself look yet more lovely, and giving to principle and honour a yet more noble and more knightly bearing ?

The last of the "illustrious three"—Thomas Moore—would never pourtray Maria correctly : he would be off at his "infant dreams"—his "roses and rainbows"—and would give you a beautiful picture, no doubt ; but it wouldn't be the least like Maria, for she was not all roses and rainbows ; —he would paint you a thing too bright for earth, but such was not the girl I write of. No ! earth was her fitting station, but only for a while : though not her final home, you saw it was her present resting-place, and that she harmonised with all its loveliest parts. Flowers seemed made for her,—forests and mountains, and all the mighty host of heaven ; for, gentle and sweet as was her soul, it was no less noble and sublime ;—yet was she formed for man's companion, and to be such was

her highest earthly hope; nor could her feelings have been more outraged than by being, in the thoughts of those she valued, set above him.

"Beauty too rich for use—too rare for earth!" has always seemed to me a very bad compliment for Romeo to pay Juliet. Had Montfort for a moment imagined such a thing of Maria, she would have felt much inclined to box his ears, if only to convince him that she was not an angel, but quite earthly.

But what a word have I used in speaking of my heroine!—Paint! I think of the illustrators, and tremble: I think of all the barbarities they have practised on Isabella, Countess de Croye, and others,—and is it to be wondered at that I am in agony for my poor Maria?

With respect to Isabella, I am by no means sure that an action for libel would not lie against the perpetrators. Oh, bless me!—I mean illustrators; for, if the face be taken as an index of the mind, surely never were more unhandsome things said of a young lady—not even in the

regions of St. Giles's. Let me die if the man playing the clarionet in Hogarth's Enraged Musician might not have sat for the likeness!

And 'tis thus with all of them—Smirke, and one or two others, who really have mind, excepted. Is it not very hard they will not let the beautiful ideal alone, but must try to lay hold of it with their daubed and dirty fingers?—And a pretty thing they make of it! I once saw Miranda transformed by a conjuror of this sort (whose power quite eclipsed that of her magician father) into a remarkably comely young woman, who seemed formed by nature to do wonders at the washing-tub;—but this was by a private practitioner, and has not yet been given to the "taste of the age," which, however, I haven't a doubt it would suit.

But there has lately sprung up a still more disgusting set of illustrators—English Carlo Dolcis, without any of his redeeming qualities. They appear to think there is only one thing to be attended to in the composition of a heroine—to make her all of barley-sugar. Trying to express her character in

her face never enters into their thoughts; but they are quite satisfied with their performance if she looks pretty with all her might, and, as far as black or blue eyes, pale or rosy cheeks are concerned, they stick to the pattern.

No! I must give up Maria!—I cannot describe her. My love, indeed, as I have hinted in my last much likened her to Eve: but, to say nothing of the difference in dress of the two ladies, I do not recollect any thing about a little smutty tin pot in Paradise, which here, however, made a very prominent article. Maria, to his great annoyance, paraded it quite ostentatiously. I really think

else earthly to do, which is, no doubt, not a little flattering to them.

He of the hour-glass, however, never before to them flew so fast: there was positively no keeping pace with him. They seemed hardly to have begun scenting the inspiriting morning air of the mountains, before evening stole upon them with her demure face, looking as if she had not come one bit before she might have been expected. If to Maria it was happiness for which she knew not a name sweet enough, to bustle about all day in Montfort's sight and for his comfort, the thought hardly appeared to have taken possession of her mind before her labours were over, and she was again seated by his side. And if he sat down outside the hut to watch Maria busy about their dinner, hours had passed away and dinner was ready before it seemed to him that he had got quite comfortable in his seat, and begun fully to enjoy that deliciously dreaming kind of happiness that comes over us when we are still very weak and languid, but feel cheered almost to intoxication by the presence of a bright sun and a kind nurse.

With respect to watching, a perfect change had taken place. Montfort had again become the watcher instead of the watched. As soon as Maria was assured that he was past all danger, and certainly recovering, her eyes, like Captain Parry's compass when he got to—I forget the exact latitude and longitude, but *vide* Appendix—turned to any part but that to which they had before so steadfastly pointed. Nevertheless, although her glances were seldom towards him, you saw by her manner that she was fully conscious of the direction his took.

Whether or no a look is to be felt like a blow, I won't say; but this I know, that I am sometimes aware of certain looks being upon me without ever having seen them. There is one little basilisk—Heaven's blessing be upon her! whose fascination is so powerful that I am sure I should feel the spell to my very heart if she only took a stolen peep at my little finger.

All this morning it might have been remarked that Lion kept his eyes on his mistress nearly as much as did her other admirer; but I will not

answer for it that it was from altogether so sentimental a motive, as they were occasionally directed to what she was cooking, which seemed to imply that the thoughts of eating had something to do with his devotion. Montfort would as soon have thought of eating Maria. The royal cook was trying to make a little broth for her patient in her favourite tin cup out of the least-dressed of their meat; Li being promised the *bouillie:* "and thus," said she, "I shall provide for both my troubles at once."

Maria was very fond of coupling the pair together; I don't mean as they couple hounds, but including them in the same sentence. Why should this have been? Was it that she thought Montfort might also in idea put himself on a par with his yokefellow, and conceive that some portion of the affection that was expressed for the one must attach to the other? Did she hope that the language she could address to Li would be claimed by him to whom she could not address it? Did she conceive that Montfort would suppose he had a right to half of such a speech as "Li,

my poor Li, who followed me through danger and want! Li shall never part from me; but share even my grave, if I am allowed to have one."

I cannot answer the question I have asked. I am young and simple, and know nothing of the depths and mysteries of this passion. But if what I have just related may account for a little of Maria's kindness to Li, Montfort, who really loved him nearly as well, was no less deceitful at times. If he saw her caress him, the moment he thought he was not observed he would call him over and do so too. In fact, he was an innocent point at which their unavowed feelings might meet.

Montfort was not allowed to enjoy his Mussulman heaven—his dreamy happiness with a houri flitting before him in his visions, like a fire-fly before the half-closed eyes of a muser, without being often disturbed by the houri herself consulting him on some knotty point which was by no means of a heavenly nature, for their housekeeping was not got over without much planning and contriving on their parts. Perhaps the pleasure these consultations gave to both might have

been a great cause of their so frequently laying their heads together. [I beg this phrase may not be understood literally.]

Nature had made it impossible for Maria to do any thing awkwardly; but it must be confessed her knowledge as a housewife did not go very far, of which she felt rather ashamed, for she was too much of a real lady to be fine lady enough to think there was any thing grand in being ignorant on such subjects; and it was quite in vain that Montfort told her she ought to give herself airs about it instead of trying to excuse it; which she did by pleading with all humility—"You know I cannot help it, that it is not my fault, for I never had an opportunity of learning to do any thing useful:"—which was true, for until thus set to exercise her ingenuity, she had always been as useless as a queen ought to be. But thus it is, that the really great often do not understand the affectations to be great of we little ones—do not exactly comprehend to what end all our mighty efforts aim. We may strut and swell like so many turkey-cocks, without being understood for our pains.

Montfort, too, was above such vulgar trash; but, nevertheless, he did not think himself justified in ever giving his ideas in any case, however plain it might be, without first having plenty of conversation on the subject; which would sometimes induce Maria to give it as her candid opinion, "that he did not really know much more of the matter than she did, although he pretended to do so."

I have endeavoured, it will be perceived, to mark a difference between the real and the fine lady. I fain would do so—as deeply as it is marked in truth. And the difference is this: the one, above silly pretence, and actuated by good feelings and good taste, is always ready, in as great a degree as is to be expected from our nature, to give herself up for the comfort and happiness of those around her. The other, full of pretence, with grovelling taste and blunted feelings, cuts through and mangles those of other people for the most momentary gratification of her own coarse mind.

I have my doubts if fine ladies (unless they repent) go to heaven.

But whilst describing how fast flew the time of the lovers, I must not forget my fair reader, who may not feel it move so rapidly if I describe every thing they said and did, but which still was happiness to them. These were ample for their amusement, but might not prove so to the possessor of the sweet eyes that now rest upon these pages, because, to fully enter into their feelings, it would be necessary for her also to be in love—which, of course, is not the case, although that blush would seem to tell a different tale. I shall therefore skip a little, just to save her that trouble, and merely say of the rest of this day, that it gave Montfort more strength than Maria expected, and almost as much as she wished.

On the following morning they were not near so lazy. Maria was out of the hut at such an early hour that Montfort feared she would get her feet wet before the sun had power to dry up the dew, and he felt at first inclined to scold; for, in all their wanderings, it was a deep source of anxiety to him, lest her strength should give way under

the hardships she was exposed to; but when her face met his sight, now again in rosy health, it really was not in his power to alarm himself, although he tried to do so; and his delight at seeing her so well, called up a colour in his own cheek, which by no means belonged to it at present. From Maria all traces of her fright had at length disappeared, and Montfort could not help saying, "It is such a comfort to see you looking like yourself again!" To which she made no reply, but cast a glance at the exact spot where she knew the lock of her hair was lying. It was not at all the sort of look to stop there—it entered his bosom with as much ease as the sharpest sword would have done; indeed, with more ease,—that is, to Montfort.

Maria's colour, although not quite so deep, was full as honest as any dairy-maid's, and her face stood washing as well. But not so Montfort's! When the excitement was over, it quickly resumed its invalidish look; for although another night's rest, and another good sleep, had additionally

recruited him, he was still more weak than he could have fancied it possible from the few hours his sufferings had lasted.

When Maria next remarked his face at breakfast-time, the change in it immediately struck her. "Bless me! how sadly pale he looks again! but he was not pale half an hour ago. What could have given him colour then? He must have been blushing! What could it have been at? I am sure it was not at any thing I said, for I could not say a word—not even look in his face when he spoke so kindly to me. Ah! then that's the reason! I myself must have blushed. Now I am very much vexed at that, as it may frighten him from speaking to me in the same way again. He must have thought he had said too much—which I am sure he did not. But he is very foolish!"

Maria's speculations were wrong as to the cause of Montfort's colouring, but, nevertheless, I may explain the meaning of them.

Although such a passion as her's makes us as jealous of the honour as of the love of its object,

and therefore, as I have already said, she would not for the world have had Montfort declare the feelings she knew him to possess, still, it must be confessed, she did think him a little over-scrupulous; and that he need not, by fits and starts, try to look so very cold, nor, to give the impression that the deep interest for her, which he was aware he could not always conceal, proceeded from that cause alone, be constantly talking of his gratitude —an odious phrase, it would have seemed, but that Maria knew its true meaning.

To say the truth, Montfort's parrot-like use of this word did sometimes make Maria rather pettish; and now and then her pettishness got her into a little scrape. On one occasion Montfort had said something which made Maria fancy he was for the moment rather desponding on her account, for which she laughed at him and asked, "Well, what are you going to conjure up next to alarm yourself about?"

"Nothing can alarm me, Maria, whilst you are safe and well." This was said with all his heart,

and it pleased Maria accordingly; but he quickly added, in what she fancied to be an altered tone, "and it would be the height of ingratitude."

"O, come! no more gratitude!" said she, abruptly, and laying a greater stress on the last word than perhaps the sentence required.

"But I meant gratitude to Heaven," replied Montfort, with a quiet sort of stare at Maria's misunderstanding the meaning of so plain a speech.

"Oh!" stammered Maria, in some confusion, "I fancied it was to me."

"Heaven and thee!" mused Montfort. "Pretty juxtaposition!" and he would like to have sighed amazingly, but did not dare.

But Maria was seldom unguarded enough to let her hasty feelings betray themselves in words. She generally argued herself out of them by saying, "Am I not a fool to feel this unreasonable waspishness about his occasional coldness of manner towards me, when I know his heart? And am I not worse than a fool to feel it when I know his

motive for acting so, and when I cannot, even in my least sensible moments, make myself believe that he does not deserve every credit for the attempt?" And then she usually ended by adding, "But, poor fellow! what a great deal of trouble it would save him if I could only tell him that all his efforts are thrown away!"

When after breakfast Maria was again busy in her occupations, which on this fourth day of her apprenticeship she found herself much more at home in,—and when, of her two "plagues and troubles," as she was never tired of calling them, she had seated the one, and the other had seated himself, quite comfortably outside their door, she looked for some time as if revolving great things in her mind. At length she said with much the air of a Pythoness or wrapt Sybil, "I 'll make a cake!" Her mysterious looks, which had been so profound as to have attracted the notice of one, if not of both, of her companions, were now all explained.

"The deuce you will, Maria! and how will you manage it?"

"Why, have I not flour, and water, and hands?"

"That you have," thought Montfort; "the prettiest I ever saw, though not always the most useful."

"And I'll make it sweet too, for I'll put the honey in it!"

Had Montfort been a London shop-boy, he must inevitably have said, with a jerk, and a smirk, and a wriggle, that "*Miss* might save the honey," &c.; and, although he was not the style of man who could possibly utter such a thing, I won't answer for it that the cockney idea did not come into his head.

Did mighty Love himself ever show a mightier power than this, of transforming a gentleman into any thing like a cockney?

"And how will you manage to bake it, Maria?"

"Why, I will make it very thin, and bake it upon a red-hot stone."

"You will make a nice mess of it!"

"Come, come, sir! no impertinence, or Li and I will eat it all, and not give you any."

"Then perhaps I shall be saved the hardest part of the job!"

It must be admitted that Maria's bright conception was not altogether realised; for, for the life of her, she could not get it to stick together, and was obliged to boil it at last—when it made a pudding which they all thought very good. But the principal advantage of the attempt consisted in its making them laugh a good deal: besides, the lady's little royal hands did look so pretty dabbled all over with flour. Their cookery in general, I must confess, was by no means scientific; and had Montfort been an epicure, and not in love with his cook-maid, he would have thought it very bad.

This evening, when the sun had got low enough behind the mountains to give them shade and coolness, Maria led her patient (who was quite sure to deserve that name when so led) a few yards from their hut to the only level spot near them. It was very small, but had a nice short

grassy sward over it. Here they walked slowly up and down for some time, Maria, as Montfort leant upon her arm, looking not only delighted, but also proud,—a pride, however, which, in spite of the bull, I must call a "humble pride"—a pride which said "see what I have been permitted the means of doing," rather than "see what I have done!" She looked most dangerous as she told him, "the first time she could get him to this spot had been set down as an epoch in her mind, ever since she was sure he was recovering, but that she hardly hoped to have been able to do so before to-morrow."

"I should not have been here for a month with any other nurse, Maria—perhaps never."

"Oh, that's nonsense!" said Maria, looking almost too happy.

"It is no such thing!—but to say nothing of your care since, do you think I have forgotten your bringing me to the hut? Do you think I shall ever forget it? Circumstances have compelled us to call each other brother and sister

notwithstanding the real difference of our situations in life, and this seems to have been prophetic, for you have shown me even more than a sister's kindness." Maria would have replied, "that it was not every sister who had to thank her brother for life, and for more than life;" but happiness sometimes had, upon her, the extraordinary effect of making her silent.

Montfort had taken advantage of their walking up and down to mention this circumstance, which he thought it would be unkind not to do at all, but which he did not care to do while Maria had an opportunity of looking in his face as he spoke: and this the girl naturally would do if she could, without any evil intention on her part.

If you have any thing deeply interesting to speak of, never, under any circumstances, do so whilst you are sitting down with a person: the awful look you get as the disclosure takes place is enough to push a Dutchman from his centre of gravity. If the subject is not only of deep interest, but also very disagreeable, try to catch the oppor-

tunity of whispering it in a crowd. I have found this a relief.

One does now and then make such provoking blunders, and in the most trifling words too. When they had been walking up and down in silence for a time, Montfort said, "Why, even the colour upon that snowy peak looks more pure and beautiful to-night than usual." But for the word "even," the speech would have been nothing. As it was, it made Maria look so pleased, that Montfort looked quite displeased. These four letters pointed too directly at the cause of this effect. They would have made the dullest girl consider, "if every thing appears beautiful to him to-night, it must be because his mind is disposed to be pleased with every thing;" and the least vain would not have gone beyond herself for a cause when there was no other possible cause near. Now Maria had not dulness, and had vanity—that is, a little of it—just as much as she ought to have had. Montfort's displeasure, however, did not last long, for he made the same mistake which

many of us do in graver matters, "between confessing sins, and repenting of them:" so he just said to himself, "How very wrong!" and by the time Maria looked up again, he appeared as much at his ease as ever he was.

When Maria thought he had walked quite enough, she proposed to return; but although Montfort was of the same opinion, he nevertheless said, "What! so early, Maria?" This may appear unreasonable; but the fact is, he found it so delightful to be made to do by Maria even what he did not wish, that he, quite unlike Falstaff, got a taste for compulsion, and would fain also be made to do what he did wish. It had another advantage—it gave Maria the opportunity of repeating the prettiest sentence they had ever heard in their lives—so they both thought it when she spoke it the first time—"It is high time for us to go home!" *Our home!* why, it called up a whole novel-ful of feelings in their bosoms, and made Montfort look, if possible, more delighted than his guide, as he said, on their turning towards the hut,

"Well, Maria! If I have got the best nurse in the world, you must admit that there never was such an obedient patient before."

"You are pretty good; and, indeed, now you do every thing I tell you, a tolerably reasonable person altogether; but, to be sure, I had some trouble to get you into such order."

CHAPTER VIII.

"This rock, and these demesnes, have been my o
Where I have liv'd at honest freedom; paid
More pious debts to Heaven, than in all
The fore-end of my time."

SHAKESPEA

WHEN they had reached "home," and se

"Well," said Maria, after thinking a moment, "I dare say I might."

There ended her speech, but not her thoughts: the latter continued as follows, "But if I did, my gentleman, you were guilty of obtaining a hum under false pretences, for I am sure it must have been your improved looks that made me do so; and what had become of them when we met again?"

As Maria had given no reply to his request, or rather hint, Montfort continued, "If you sang then without being asked, you must be a very ill-natured lady if you will not do so now you are asked!"

"Oh! but I might have been inclined to sing then, and not now, and therefore good-nature must be out of the question in either case."

"It is a hard matter to conceive good-nature having nothing to do with any of your actions."

"Ay, do give the babe a sugar-plum to coax it to be good! But now I am nurse, I won't be treated like a child; and I have a great mind not to sing."

"What a poor silly man he must be, Maria, who believes every thing a lady says!"

"And pray, what calls forth that not very new observation just now?"

"Why, I knew you would sing at first, because you were asked; but now you have half said you won't, I am sure no earthly power could stop you."

"I'll stop you!" returned Maria, and began to sing immediately.

Who ever heard of a heroine with a bad voice! How could she say "soft things" with it! which, of course, as heroine, she is bound to do! But

foot leaves in the snow! What wonder, then, if Maria's whole person, and her voice to boot, made Montfort post off to Egypt? Since their walk, Maria had very often looked at the snowy peak that hath been mentioned, and she did with all her heart agree to its seeming more than usually beautiful this evening; but she expressed no surprise at it—indeed, she felt none—for she knew whose speech had thus made brighter earth's brightest thing—had thus, in truth, "painted the lily and cast a perfume o'er the violet," and (which is strange!) without in her opinion the least "wasteful or ridiculous excess."

As she now turned her eyes to this beautiful object, on which the sun's last rays were lingering yet, and the sweet low sound floated around, her lover likened her to a "sunset" Memnon,* for it seemed to his fancy that she caught her inspiration from the rays reflected by that pure and glorious spot.

* I beg pardon for making Maria masculine—it is the only time she ever was so in her life. But it is Montfort's doing, and not mine.

Maria began with operas and ended with psalmody, and her hearer could not trace that difference in the music which was evident in the musician whilst singing it. I want to know the meaning of "sacred music?" I am sure there are portions of the Creation, which, had they been first brought out in an opera, no person would have discovered to be sacred, and there are parts in most serious operas which would not be out of place in a church. We carry our fancies a little too far when we try to distinguish between the serious and the sacred in music. This evening all that Maria sung was serious of course, for with such beautiful solemnity around her,—the wild and mighty mountains alone, fading from her sight as the heavens grew yet more pale and grey,—she could not have sung any thing else. In fact, she was a person whose taste was sufficient to guide her without having recourse to her reason; and therefore the latter gift, like gold bestowed on one who has no opportunity of spending it, seemed almost thrown away. I wish she had given it to me!

Although, where they now were, they had nothing to fear, the habit of living in a state of alarm had given them such caution, that Maria sung softer and lower than even the hour and her feelings would otherwise have prompted. This had an effect on Montfort, which she did not think of, but which, had she known, she would not have regretted: it brought the idea more direct to his soul, that this was all for him,—for him alone were all these rose-leaves showered down; for such the sweet notes seemed as they fell around him. His delight at length was an excess bordering on painful: he almost wished to ask her to stop; instead of which, when she did so, saying, "I am sure I have tired you," he begged her to sing an evening hymn; and then, if the music sounded more sacred, it was only because such were the feelings of the singer.

When it so happens that all things around us point towards happiness, this frumpy old world of our's can never let them stay so long; but it gives a jolt, (over some of the stars, I suppose,)

and every thing goes wrong again. They must have been most unreasonable, even for lovers, who could have wished for a more delightful evening than this had been, which, by the way, as Maria and Montfort were quite content with it, proves them to have been reasonable lovers—a species of animal not mentioned in Buffon, and of the existence of which I was before by no means aware. Nevertheless, at midnight there was a change indeed; for the rain fell in torrents, and among the hills the thunder began to rouse, and was heard in short interrupted growls, like those of a wild beast when lashing itself into fury.

Montfort was awoke by the first sound, but lay still, hoping Maria might not have heard it, and that it either would not rise to a storm, or that, if it did, it might roll off along some other ridge. It went on, however, louder and louder; and Montfort did not know whether he had better speak or no, and was vexed with himself that he had never thought of asking Maria if thunder frightened her; for, mind! nobody is frightened at the lightning!

The wind now blew so hard, that it shook the hut very much: Lion started up, and Montfort was about to do so too, for he began to think seriously of Maria's head, which, in his opinion, was by no means formed by nature to resist the roofs of houses,—when a bright flash of lightning showed him a figure nearly over his own, standing with her arms thrown up in the air, hands spread out flat, and head shrinking down, as if she fully expected, but by no means wished, to catch the creaking rafters. In fact, she was a most uncomfortable-looking caryatide.

"Good God, Maria! what are you doing there?" said Montfort, jumping up as quick as his wound would let him.

"I hardly know," replied she, in a voice which rendered what she added quite unnecessary; "but I am frightened, I believe."

"Yes, indeed you are, you foolish girl!" said Montfort, in that tone which we use when trying to scold a young lady into courage; but he continued, taking her hand kindly—"Now sit down, and tell me what you are afraid of."

"I always think thunder the most awful of all things, and I was afraid the roof would have come down upon us," replied Maria, as she sat down upon the bed, and Montfort stood beside her.

"That was the most reasonable fear; but even that was nonsense, for you know it is so light, it could not hurt us."

"Oh! but if it had come down on your wounded arm?"

"Then, why did you not speak to me when you got in a fright?"

"I thought it possible you might not have been awake."

"Now, Maria, was not that unkind? Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

That Maria was, in spite of her fright; but it was only shame at having been found out in such a situation—not for the act itself; in which respect she was like some of the greatest rogues unhung, or hung. She, like Montfort, had lain awake for some time, but was sooner and more deeply

alarmed at the thoughts of the roof coming down upon them, on account of his arm; and therefore, depending upon the pitchy darkness for not being found out, had stolen quietly out of bed, but never thought of the lightning until the first flash discovered her.

"How long had you been there, Maria?" continued Montfort.

"Only an instant: Lion roused himself as I got up. But," she added, "it does blow very hard—does it not?"

That Montfort was of this opinion, was more evident from his acts than his words; for although he continued to explain to Maria why the roof could not possibly hurt them even if it did fall, and would therefore be but a temporary inconvenience at worst, he made her sit down upon the ground; and after he had got the torch, which Maria lighted, he formed a sort of shelter with their bed-boards, by placing two upon end, and the other two across them. Maria's hands had been obliged to assist Montfort's only available one in

getting the boards from under their beds, which they contrived to do without disturbing them much.

Montfort's contrivance appearing to him quite strong enough for his purpose, he made Maria and Li get under it; the latter of whom required no persuasion, for he crept in in a great hurry the moment Maria had done so; seeming to rely on it, that the mistress whom he followed through danger would always share with him any shelter she might have for herself.

If such were the thoughts of beast, those of man did her no less justice; and therefore when he had wedged the boards so tight that there was no fear of their moving, Montfort completed the trio; not from conceiving there was any danger for himself—he put more trust in his own skull than in Maria's, in this one respect; but he knew she fancied there was; and such being the case, he was aware that even when she was in a fright, (that touchstone of a mind where there is too much of self) no powers could persuade her to

accept of safety unless he who offered it should share it with her. Moreover, being quite convinced such would be her sentiments, he by no means wished to force her to sport them at the moment when of necessity he must be in the perilous situation of being pressed close to her dear side.

Maria now felt they were secure from the principal fear—the roof; but still the dim light of the torch discovered to Montfort a very pale face, and each flash of lightning showed him eyes turned up full of awe.

Downright fright takes from beauty, but awe adds to it—sublimes it; and on no features has it so great an effect as on those of a laughing cast. It is a most happy mixture of the sublime and beautiful. Nevertheless, Montfort went on chiding her, probably as an excuse for having taken her hand again. "Tell me, dear Maria, how it happens that imaginary dangers have more effect on you than real ones? for I know it is the *thunder* you are afraid of."

"I believe you are right," said Maria, attempt-

ing a smile. "I never could help being more alarmed at thunder than any thing else; and all the schooling my courage has lately had, has not made me much better." As Maria finished her speech there came a very loud peal, at which she gave a start, and her heart beat so quick and strong, that Montfort even felt it. He was almost tempted to throw his arms about her to assure her; though it may be questioned if this would have tended to still her heart. However, he did not do so, and immediately after Maria spoke in a firmer voice, having been a little ashamed, and began to pat Li, and tell him he was nearly as great a fool

placed it in the most sheltered corner. He was getting up to bring it to Maria to light it again, but he felt both her hands pressed firmly upon his arm to keep him down; and so they continued until the violence of the gust died away, when they gradually relaxed. "Now that there is no danger," said Maria, "you had better let me get the lamp." But this he would not do.

When they were again seated, Maria said, alluding to the beauty of the evening, "what a change a few short hours have made!"

"And what a change a few short hours will make, Maria!" replied Montfort. "Instead of sitting under this place in a great fright, you will be up singing at your work so merrily."

"Do you always look on the bright side of things? or is it only for the sake of the coward you have got with you?" asked Maria. This was a question Montfort could not answer exactly as he wished, for, in truth, when alone he was much too apt to seek the shadowy side; and he required such a being as Maria to be near

assuring her that neither she nor her favourite would suffer in his opinion whilst they only feared thunder; and that, in any danger merely mortal, he should have the same confidence he had before in their good behaviour. "But to tell you the truth, Maria," he added, "I am much more concerned about Lion's character than yours. He could not be a real coward without being despicable, but you might."

Maria made no answer to this last speech, but went out to make her toilet. She thought to herself, however, "I know what would make me a coward, or, at least, make me prevent to be one."

"What?" said a little tiny elf which jumped in the air just above her nose as she went over the water, supposed to be the gracious space of her sunny eyes.

"Why, if Montfort were my husband, and we were in no real danger."

"That would give you courage, Maria?"

"Oh no! for then he would take me in his

[redacted]

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [

"Well, it would not be any harm then!"

"But you ought not to wish for any thing of the sort."

"Why I can't help it. But I would rather die than be in any other person's!"

"That's no excuse, Miss; and you ought to be ashamed of thinking about a husband at all. Young ladies should never think about being married until they find they are so."

"Oh, that's good!" cries Maria, gaining courage enough to laugh at such an assumption in spite of her fright. "How can she know whether or no to say 'yes!' to her lover unless she thinks about it before he asks her to marry him?"

Now we must acknowledge, that in all our minds, the crime of laughing at our grandest lecture falls little short of felony. Its effect on the already crabbed old gentleman may therefore be easily conceived—which so alarms Maria, that she says deprecatingly, "Oh, dear sir! can my feelings for Montfort be so very wrong when

they tell me that if his happiness could not be secured in any other way, I would consent never to see him again, but go away and die for him? And, surely sir, you should make allowances for a woman's heart, for you have been loved yourself —dearly loved—you know you have!"

"Ah, Maria! you are a very sensible, good girl. But although your feelings are exactly what they ought to be, you must not declare them so openly, for the world will not enter into them so tenderly as I have done."

I shall not enter into any more of Maria's feelings for this day, for they were all happy



CHAPTER IX.

"For my mind misgives
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date.
. . . . .
But He, that hath the steerage of my course
Direct my sail!"

I FEAR my fair reader will think I neglect Malvolio for a great deal too much: I almost determine to get in a sad scrape with Maria if she knew it, and he cannot deserve neglect who deserved Maria's love; and he did deserve it al— every bit of it. Now, why am I more about him? Is not this a character? In truth he was a frank-hearted, noble fellow: with feelings as gentle and tender as his spirit was loyal and high: and moreover, he did not love Maria one bit the better for her being a queen in the

[redacted] would he have turned her into a common [redacted]. he would have been truly [redacted] for in that case he fancied, in spite of his [redacted] he must not utterly despair of winning her heart and hand: and what were throne and [redacted] compared to them? Then as to conscience, why the matter was not to be compared to him—except that at this unlucky moment his affection had undergone a complete revolution. Just now he discovered it was not with respect to [redacted]—although he had revolutions there too, and so many of them that he wondered where the [redacted] they all came from: for if to-day he loved

[redacted]



mind (which are very apt to make us pathetic), he likened it to many a one he had in his younger and more innocent days (as they are called) tied to the tails of unhappy dogs—and the sensation began in a different way. When he had become somewhat reconciled to the hard necessity of having his wound dressed as the wound of a decent man should be, he began to laugh at himself for having borne towards the innocent cause of this necessity somewhat the feelings of the child who beats the brandish-bush that scratches him. Then he began to remark, "This little wretched smutty thing seems to be looked on by Maria quite as a treasure. It actually appears to give her pleasure. Then ought I to hate the sight of it? I don't hate the sight of it—but why does it give her pleasure? It certainly is of great use in dressing my arm"—and while he was thus reasoning, as fate would have it, he peeped through a crack in the door which he was very apt to do when he was outside the hut and Maria in), and saw her kiss the [illegible]

contrary, could he have turned her into a commoner's daughter, he would have been truly happy, for in that case he fancied, in spite of his modesty, he need not utterly despair of winning her heart and hand; and what were throne and sceptre compared to them? Then as to constancy, why, the north star was not to be compared to him—except that at this unlucky moment his affection had undergone a complete revolution. But don't be alarmed, it was not with respect to Maria—although he had revolutions there too, and so many of them that he wondered where the deuce they all came from; for if to-day he loved her with all his heart and soul, to-morrow he loved her still better, which must have been with another heart and soul.

Neither was it towards the noble Li. Had the dog been the reverse of what he was, and as "sour-natured" as Crab himself, his attachment to Maria would have secured Montfort's to him.

It was a greater wonder still—the little tin cup had become quite a favourite with him. It was not that, early recollections coming to his

mind (which are very apt to make us pathetic), he likened it to many a one he had in his younger and more innocent days (as they are called) tied to the tails of unhappy dogs—no! the flirtation began in a different way. When he had become somewhat reconciled to the hard necessity of having his wound dressed as the wound of a decent man should be, he began to laugh at himself for having borne towards the innocent cause of this necessity somewhat the feelings of the child who beats the bramble-bush that scratches him. Then he began to remark, "This little wretched smutty thing seems to be looked on by Maria quite as a treasure; it actually appears to give her pleasure. Then ought I to hate the sight of it? I don't hate the sight of it! But why does it give her pleasure? It certainly is of great use in dressing my arm!"—and whilst he was thus reasoning, as fate would have it, he peeped through a crack in the door (which he was very apt to do when he was outside the hut and Maria in), and saw her kiss her trea-

sure as she put it on the shelf, after having dressed his arm very comfortably, owing to its assistance. "Bless me! how could I think it so ugly? Why, it is quite the shape of the antique! and really, considering the hard usage I have no doubt it has met with, a very pretty little cup! I quite like it; indeed, I always thought it—"

Another walk on the spot of turf—another twilight hour at their door, and again Maria went to bed with her young heart full of happiness.

In the forenoon of the following day, whilst Maria and Montfort were seriously debating on the means of getting food, their stock of meat being nearly exhausted, Lion came into the hut, and began to pull Maria by the trowsers. "Li, for shame!" said she, "lie down and be quiet."

Li had no notion of it, but began to be more unquiet; pulled her again, and scraped with his foot, trying by every means in his power to make her follow him.

"What can the dog mean?" said Montfort; "let us go and see!"

They had not to go far, for at the foot of a steep part of the rock, a few yards below their hut, whither Li bounded before them delightedly, they found a kid half dead, with whose throat Li's teeth had evidently made free, as it was torn and still bleeding. It was by no means a pretty sight; and as Maria had already made a face, and said, "Poor thing!" Montfort sent her back to the hut, scrambled down the rock, and with his one hand managed to cut "poor thing's" throat effectually with a clasp knife, although he certainly felt rather disgusted at the operation. He then hung it over a part of the rock with its head downwards, to bleed. From the way the animal was scraped and scratched against stones and briars, the dog must evidently have dragged it some distance, although he could not have been long about it, as his absence had not been observed. Montfort concluded that when he reached the rock, he had found a difficulty in getting it up, and therefore had come to them for help.





foraging, would amply reply his additional trouble from the comparative safety in which he would think he left her with such a guide beside her. His gratitude to Li for the supply he had now brought them was unbounded, as it at once put an end to most painful doubts and fears. He had already positively refused to let Maria go in quest of food, and he did not suppose he should have strength enough to do so himself before their necessities became very pressing, if even then. Like Li's, his thoughts had been turned to sheep-stealing, or goat-stealing, which is pretty much the same thing; but, as many of us are, he had as yet been kept honest in this respect, from want of a tempting opportunity to become a rogue. He had often thought of the goats that, half-wild, stray about the mountains all the year round, except when driven off by the snow; but from their agility, and their being so shy, he doubted the possibility of getting within shot of them; and even should he be so fortunate, he had determined not to venture to fire a gun except in the greatest extremity. How Lion had achieved his exploit Montfort could not

make out, but supposed he must from the hut have observed the kid to have got into a situation where it might be easily surprised. Be this as it may, it turned out a very delicious, as well as a large and seasonable supply, for it was a fine animal nearly half-grown, and furnished forth their evening meal sumptuously.

And again the sun went down upon them as bright, and saw them as happy, as it had done on former evenings. As they stood upon a rock watching its setting, isolated from the rest of the world, fancy might have pictured them the children of the beam, whose "westering slow" they loved to mark sojourning upon earth but gazing back to the land of their birth.

But, no! they looked too contented with the orb they were on, to long for any other.

Maria had been so happy, and looked so happy for some time, especially the day before, that Montfort was surprised to find her on the following morning, sitting up under their breakfast tree as grave, and nearly as stiff, as a country Miss at a

solemn tea-drinking—none of that repose in her attitude which speaks of repose within—and full of thought.

"Oh, Maria! you are out of spirits to-day!" said he.

Maria started, and looked perplexed, and said, with a blush, "How do you know?"

"I must be dull indeed if I could not read such a face as that!"

"Don't you know," replied she, "it is very impertinent to try to read a lady's thoughts? At all events, it is sometimes an unprofitable study." In saying this there was an attempt at her usual merriment, but it failed; and, altogether, there was an impression left on Montfort which he himself could not understand. He however said, "Your spirits are so good in general, that I must not abuse you for losing them now and then, considering the circumstances you are under. But, dear Maria! how can I bring them back to you?"

"Do not think I am out of spirits, and perhaps I shall forget it too."

And Maria did seem to forget it, and became quite cheerful; and her light-hearted joyous laugh was heard among the rocks as usual at any sally of Montfort's, whether witty or no, for in such cases we are not particular. When we like the speaker, we often give a laugh on credit; or rather give that reward to the attempt at being clever which prosy people would say is only due to the successful execution. But in this I disagree with the said prosers, for when a person has any thing really clever to say, he will say it on his own account, and one does not feel personally obliged to him; but when he says any thing not very clever, to try to make us laugh, it is clear it must be all for our sakes, and therefore it merits our gratitude.

But, notwithstanding the sun-glimpse which thus broke through the cloud hanging over Maria's usually bright young brow, in two or three hours afterwards Montfort found her again sitting down (when she ought to have been minding her work too!) looking more sad than before. He did not

seek to make her tell a story, by asking her the cause, (which he thought would most probably have been the consequence of his doing so, as she had not told him voluntarily,) but he said cheerfully and kindly, "I really must scold my servant if I find her so idle!" But his kindness, instead of brightening up her countenance, had an opposite effect, which Montfort saw, and said, "Maria, we stay here too long—I do not wonder at your being gloomy. But I feel that I am now strong enough to get forward on our journey, and we will start to-morrow if you wish it."

"Oh, not for the world!" said Maria, quite aghast. "I mean, you are not nearly strong enough to travel yet, and I would not for the world you should attempt it too soon on my account."

Now Montfort, with the very best intentions, had stumbled on an awkward way of comforting Maria. If, instead of asking her to leave their hut to-morrow, he could have told her they were to remain there for ever, he would have seen a different effect on her face. Yes! but for her

father's sake, she would have been quite content to have nestled among the rocks with Montfort, like a couple of marmots, for the rest of their lives: and rather amongst these rocks than any others in the world; for although she was as little of a heathen as any body, yet still a portion of that love will linger about the spot where a happy event has taken place, which should, perhaps, all be given to the Disposer of events. And what did not Maria owe to this humble shelter?

Montfort's next attempt at comforting was more successful, when he said, "Well, Maria, we will stay as long as you think proper—you shall be the judge, if you will only promise not to be as grave, as cold, and as stiff as the rocks around you."

"Do not let me be long alone, and you need not fear it. Your good spirits will shame my bad ones, and they will leave me."

Here 's a pretty business! to hear Maria, whose song in general was as merry as the skylark's, because her course was the same—heaven-ward—

talking of bad spirits! But, although Montfort was destined to be kept in the dark as to the cause of this change, there is no reason my reader should, as I rather pique myself upon never being unnecessarily mysterious with him. I have no idea, for instance, of trying to throw a curtain over the loves of two people who, it is evident to the meanest capacity, must love before the tale is told: indeed, it is rather amusing to see with what an air of grave importance people draw up their curtains to show their lovers kissing at last, when every body has known what was going on inside it all the time. For my own part, I like at once to let my reader (as a waiting-maid would say) "know the rights of it." I have therefore over and over declared that Maria and Montfort had not only dipped in this delicious stream, but, madness as it was in their case, had both plunged in, head over heels, without thinking of the rocks that might be at the bottom to bruise them. Poor Maria was already knocking her head—no, faith! her heart—against the very hardest of them, remorse!

Maria had now known herself to be loved one whole week, and, except during the time of her fright and fears, it had been truly a week of happiness; because, however composed to the eye, her mind and feelings had been kept in such a whirl of delight, that she could not dwell on any thing of an opposite nature. In a worldly sense, to be sure, her lot had been a hard one: but how is this real world shut out from our view when the world of love first opens to us! She had, as it were, lived in a dream; and all dreams may be troubled, and must at length be broken; and now, alas! clouds began to appear in the horizon of Maria's hitherto bright land of visions.

"Oh, how heaven-like has been the beginning of this passion!" mused she, as she sat waiting for Montfort under their breakfast tree. And scarcely had the idea been formed, when another swept across her soul, as fast and as fatal as the poisonous simoom; and with faltering voice, and grief-stricken look, she muttered, "But the end!"

She remained in the position in which the

thought first struck her for some time, and then, with a look that to be seen once is to be seen for ever,—a look never to be forgotten, but which memory can always call up fresh as at first—she added solemnly, as if pronouncing sentence on her own happiness, "In all human probability, separation! Then what have I to answer for! Oh God! support me; and forgive me! How have I repaid all he has done for me! By making a wreck of his happiness!"

The mind is never more fertile than in such extremities. It seems to supply apt images at pleasure—that is, at its pleasure, not ours, Heaven knows!—and all that the vilest ingratitude had ever been likened to, came to Maria's in hideous array. As her eyes rested upon the breakfast she had felt so much pleasure in preparing, she said, "Do I not owe him life—every thing—even food? And what have I done?—poisoned it, and given it back to him to eat." And thus she went on for a time, like the hooked shark writhing and beating itself to death: but at length she

found some comfort as she said to herself, "As I expect to be judged, I did not think of the consequence! On the contrary, when I did think, it struck me that, as I was so far above him in rank, by giving him my heart and soul was the only generous return I had it in my power to make. But the guilt was not in giving him my own heart, for that I could not help; but in trying to win his; which I must not attempt to disguise from myself that I did do, even as if we had been equals." Another comforting thought was, "Thrown together as we have been, could he have helped loving me although I had not tried to win his love? I do not think he could! I could not help loving him!" This seems like vanity; and some such thought must have crossed Maria's brain, for she said bitterly, as she looked up to Heaven, "Oh! what have I to do with vanity now?"

These thoughts, however, although they lightened her remorse, did not dissipate her sorrow; for whatever the cause, the effect on their happiness would be the same. Montfort's fate she

could not bear to think of; and as for her own, an abyss seemed slowly but surely opening, into which she must fall at last. "But oh, my father!" said she, "how have I treated you? If I had a right to risk my own happiness, surely I had no right to trifle with yours—and I know it depends on mine. And what have I," continued she, pursuing the subject, "to recompense me for all this? Oh, let me not be ungrateful! I have that which would repay me for all, if I alone were to suffer—if my life alone were to pay the forfeit—yes! I have his love!"

It was at this moment that he whose love was recompense enough for the loss, not of a world,* but even of life itself, came to Maria, and that the conversation already related took place.

After Montfort found Maria a second time nearly "like Niobe," he did not leave her alone

* 'Tis strange how little we think of a world or two, in such cases! I dare say I have given away upwards of a dozen, first and last, myself.

a single moment for the rest of the day, but strove to cheer her by every means in his power; which, when Maria perceived, she cast her eyes upon him and could have cried: but if every additional act of kindness made her reflect with deeper sorrow on his doom, they also served to confirm her in the opinion that she could not have prevented his loving her as he did. And then came the golden thought, that a higher power had destined them to love each other—a delightful idea at all times, but on Maria it had the effect of almost reconciling her to herself—and henceforth, although she still blamed her want of caution as a fault, it was never afterwards called a crime. Her regret never again amounted to remorse!

The scene around her had also something to do with soothing Maria; for she was not one of those for whom the god of nature has spread out his beautiful world in vain. The day was neither cold enough to chill the spirits, nor warm enough to give them languor; but fresh, though sunny and soft. "Heaven's breath smelt wooingly,"

and Maria, not being in her bustling humour, sat down to enjoy it with Montfort.

There are times when merely to live is employment enough; you ask, you want no other occupation, than to sit in the shade and breathe such pure air, and see such sunshine around you.

Such a day was this. The very buz of the summer-fly, and hum of the bee, were music, because they spoke of happiness—or of life—which then seemed the same thing. All the mountain flowers were in their best; and the regal gentian had a depth of purple, and a brightness, which mocked the colours of the plains. The rhododendron too, which in Maria's laughing moments she would pluck by hands ful at once, (such was their profusion,) and scatter in the air to fall in a shower around them, now looked so beautiful, it seemed to reproach her for the waste of so much sweetness: and when a breath of air a little stronger came, and all these bent their graceful forms, Montfort said, "Maria, your

pretty courtiers are bowing to their queen! Why don't you return it?"

Such a scene, "able to drive all sadness but despair," aiding Montfort's efforts, had an effect on Maria's mind, which she would have been rather indignant to have heard attributed to any thing besides her own powers of reasoning—such weak things are the most sensible of our kind!

Montfort noticed all Maria's vagaries; and although he did not then know she had so good a cause for them, he was too intimately acquainted with human nature to be surprised at vagaries even in the being whom we all seek to make out to be perfection—the woman we love. But he thought that perfection to be by no means inconsistent with a few imperfections, which are often endearing instead of estranging; and therefore, in place of wondering at them, he tried every means to make her herself again, quite secure in the opinion that so she would have acted by him; —"only," he modestly observed, "with infinitely greater effect." But herein he was wrong; for





enjoying at the moment what she might innocently enjoy, and endeavouring to keep at a distance thoughts that troubled her; which seldom came for the future unless she was alone, and then she hastened to Montfort again, and they fled; so that he was to her what a candle is to a child afraid of ghosts; but as there is nothing poetic in a "farthing dip," Maria called him "the morning light which scared away all her spectres."



CHAPTER X

[illegible] and jocund [illegible]
[illegible] on the misty mountain's top."

SHAKESP

[illegible] a lover of Nature, Ma[illegible]
[illegible] been a great observer of
[illegible] not having improved her of the
[illegible] as constant she watched and a
[illegible] all its various forms and ch
[illegible] gave her more delight than th[illegible]

under ordinary circumstances, he very often got up early on purpose to admire them, but frequently his duties, and more frequently his "sports by wood and hill," had given him opportunities which his laziness might have denied.

The morning after Maria's day of self-torment and penitence, the fog was particularly striking in appearance: a person who has been used to see it only in a northern climate come sweeping over a flat country, in a body so dense that it looks as if you could cut it with a knife, can have no idea of such a scene. When the dawn came on, not deep and glowing as usual, but of an extraordinarily light and delicate pink, the wreaths began to rise from the deep vallies and low woody hills beneath in every variety of fantastic form—columns, spires, pinnacles, and airy palaces; and one which might easily be fancied into something like a female figure, they named their Ballerina. In a dress still more transparent than even a Ballerina's, it stood with one toe on a hillock, as if about to make a pirouette.

By degrees the wreaths grew thicker and thicker, until at length they congregated into a downy level sea that the eye could not pierce—a sea of white ostrich-feathers; above which were seen the tops of the lower range of hills like so many woody islands.

Still it came rolling towards them like a deluge, island after island being swallowed up, with all the fairy inhabitants that Maria and Montfort had given them. "Now," said she, coming close to his side, and shrinking up her face as one does when going to dip into cold water, "we shall be devoured too!" but just as the mist reached the edge of the rock on which their eyry was perched, the sun having acquired sufficient strength to disperse it, broke through at once when it was in the very act of sweeping over their heads. The thin particles that remained immediately about them for a moment were quickly exhaled, and a huge bank rolled off on either hand, disclosing the scene below; at which they had hardly time to look down, when the banks themselves were gone.



So sudden and striking to one who had never seen any thing of the sort before, was the clearing up of the scene, that Maria would not allow it to be accounted for by any thing less than enchantment; and she said, "Don't try to explain it to me in any prosy way, for magic I am determined to believe it, and magic with me it shall be!"

And now nature, like that other bright and changeful thing (no earthly power shall make me tell that I mean a woman) from whom a tear has hardly gone before a smile often succeeds, presented a scene of quite an opposite description. Every shrub, every flower, every blade of grass was hung with diamonds, and the jewelled festoons of the gossamer glistened in the sun almost too bright to look upon. The very spirit of life and freshness was spread around, and every living thing that inhabited so far up the mountains chirped and sung, or skipped about on the dropping rocks as if it scarce knew how to show its joy. There seemed a universal morning hymn of thanksgiving rising on every side, in which Maria and

Montfort with their delighted faces, and Li scam pering about like a wild creature, appeared to join

The first impression we receive in the morning is apt, if it is a strong one, to have an effect upon our spirits during the day: just as the impressions of early youth influence our conduct in after-life. Consequently, the tone of Maria's was now good. There are times when we cannot see approaching misfortunes, however near they may be: if they actually upon us, they are hid from our view, as a screen shuts out the near object as well as the distant mountain. This feeling influenced Maria so much, on this day, that she looked forward

you walk a good deal, increasing the distance by degrees."

The reason of Maria's recurring to the subject was, from her having thought a great deal on it since Montfort first mentioned it. With her, to think was to think justly; and she reflected, "that however much she wished to remain where they were, when once a necessity for their doing so ceased to exist, there would be an impropriety in her lingering." It cost her an effort to propose to go, but she was afterwards repaid by the consciousness of having made a sacrifice in the cause of right: and this feeling gained so much upon her, that she soon set herself in good earnest to prepare for their departure.

Her most essential preparation, accustoming Montfort to take exercise, was likewise her most delightful, because he always had to lean on her at first: but she was no less diligent in others; the principal of which was, making two bags, to throw over Lion's back, to enable him to carry what eatables they might have to take with them.

Having gotten fairly into the way of doing right,

Maria went on in it with so much ease, that made her think seriously if it would not be bett to try for the future to avoid ever the beginni to do wrong, lest she might continue in it w a like facility.

And now the morning of the last day of th stay had arrived, and Maria, in spite of hers awoke with a sigh in her mouth, which she wo not have done if she could have reasoned w herself in her sleep. According to the theo have laid down, she would have gone on, if sighing all day, yet feeling inclined to do so, she not made a rally, and given herself anot severe lecture. This lecture may seem someth like a repetition of the last, but nevertheles shall give it as a pattern to young ladies in gene I wish they would lecture themselves now then. It would save me the trouble; and th know I don't like to scold them ever so little.

"What!" said Maria, as soon as her eyes w well opened, after she had caught the sigh in fact—"What? do I, whose only prayer three we ago was to once more join my father in safety,

gret any thing which brings me nearer to that end? My dear, dear father! forgive me! I thought my wish was as much on account of your happiness as my own; but my present feelings tell me it must have been altogether selfish. Your daughter is unworthy of you. Then how can she be worthy of the only person she ever met who is like you? How would he condemn me, if he knew my feelings?

But it is not only against the best of earthly fathers that I have sinned. Oh, let me never forget what were my thoughts in coming to this spot! Were they not steeped in utter misery? Had it then been foretold to me that the hour would assuredly come in which we should be able to leave this place, both again in health, with every hope of ultimate escape, should I not have blessed the tidings that delivered me from the dreadful fear I then had? The event which at that time I hardly dared to hope for has taken place, and how do I show my gratitude?"

When once we begin to abuse ourselves with all our hearts, there is no knowing where we will

stop. "Disgusting wretch" is sometimes the best epithet I have to bestow on myself. But Maria's fancying Montfort would have condemned her feelings, was going rather too far. The only danger likely to attend his knowing of them was, that he might have fallen down and worshipped her; so much would he have loved her for having them, and so much would he have honoured her for thus struggling against them.

Maria had rated herself so soundly, that the only feeling which remained was a cheerful resignation to her present fate; and when every little domestic service, as she performed it during the day, told her it was for the last time, she thought—"Well, cannot He who disposes of happiness grant it in one place as well as another, if He thinks fit?—in the palace, as well as in the hut?—and if He does not see fit to grant me the happiness I desire, all places will be alike to me. Besides, if I do leave this spot, will not he who has made me love it go with me?" It was a long time before this last thought, although so natural a one, struck Maria.

At first her feelings could hardly distinguish between quitting the place she had been so happy in, and quitting happiness itself.

It may seem a blunder to say that Maria's being very busy to-day served to keep her quiet—but so it was: the great work of having to dress all the meat they had left against their journey occupied her so much, that it, in some measure, prevented thoughts coming into her mind which would have agitated her. When the usual time for their evening walk had passed, Montfort said, "Maria, are we not to bid adieu to our park?" To his surprise, she replied—"I think you have had exercise enough to-day." But seeing that he was disappointed, she added, after a little hesitation, "Well, if you wish it, and do not think it will be too much for you, let us go!"

Maria would fain have avoided this leave-taking, but to sacrifice herself was part of her present system, both because she thought it right to do so, and because she looked on it as a sort of penance for

her late offences; and therefore she readily went when asked to do so.

They walked up and down for some time, either in perfect silence, or making those unavailing efforts at conversation which may be likened to trying to push a weight that is too heavy for our strength up a hill;—it is sure to come back upon us, and find us more exhausted from our attempts, and therefore less capable of renewing them. After a while, the pauses growing longer and longer, Montfort saw that matters were not likely to mend; and therefore, casting round one farewell look, he took the opportunity of the first turn that brought them near the entrance of the spot, and led Maria out without saying a word.

The evening was chilling and dreary in an unusual degree for such a climate, at that season of the year. The winds sighed and moaned; and such cutting blasts came off the neighbouring peaks, that they appeared to make the flowers even look cold and comfortless. Such a scene, at such a time, seemed to aggravate their fates, when both re-

quired rather to be soothed and reconciled to them. Maria sat shivering outside the hut, and could not help looking very pensive as she cast her eyes around, and thought misfortune appeared already to have come upon them. But that look was quickly turned into her kindest smile, for Montfort brought out both parts of the cloak and wrapped about her, and made Li lie down upon her feet, to keep them warm, where he looked happy at least, which he had not done for some time before.

"If you are determined to sit out here, I am determined you shall not catch cold," said Montfort, sitting down close beside her, but on the windward side, which Maria contended against, alleging, "that as she had the cloak, it would be but fair for him to be in the shelter." But Montfort replied, "No, as we are going on our way to-morrow, it is time for me to cease to be the protected, and to become again the protector."—"But that must depend upon me," returned Maria; "for as I have been acknowledged dictator, it rests with me when I will lay down my power."

(Bless me, I fear we shall convict Maria of being a little blue-stocking, after all! I hav'n't a doubt she had read Livy.)

"Well," replied Montfort, "I will not object to your retaining it until to-morrow, if you will lay it down when we leave the place where you have used it so tyrannically. But, in the mean time, I must humbly beg to be permitted to stay where I am, for I am really not at all cold, and you can hardly help shivering now."

When they had again been silent for a little while, and their faces had again begun to assume somewhat of the appearance of the weather, Montfort said, "There is a sadness in leaving any place for ever, even one that we dislike!"

"And do *you* dislike this place?"

"Oh, Maria!" uttered reproachfully, was his only reply.

Short as their sentences were, they implied too much; and Maria, in great confusion, began to unsay her part as well as she could. "Surely we never can think of this spot without gratitude

to Him who led us here, most probably to save both our lives."

Montfort rather felt that Maria had no business to take away his own word—gratitude—from him; and naturally thought "if it had the same meaning with her as with him." Nevertheless, it appears he was not too much hurt to make use of it, as he said, "And must not my gratitude to Him, Maria, be mixed with gratitude to one without whose aid I never should have got here?"

"Do not begin to talk of my poor services again, or you will find what a beggar I am in thanks."

"Poor services!—Were they not such as no other girl in your situation would have thought of attempting, and did not my life depend upon them?"

"But what are they compared to those you have rendered me?"

Montfort, after pausing a moment, said, "I mentioned the subject, perhaps without thinking; but if both have rendered services, let us

think they have been repaid by those we have received."

"Then you do not like to be my creditor or debtor?" said Maria, rather demurely.

"Can you think as you speak? Can you believe I would not rather give up my life, than give up having had it saved by you—by your sisterly kindness?"

"No," returned Maria; "I cannot conceive you impatient under any kindness you may think you have received, for I cannot, myself, by any means give into the odious sentiment of 'Gratitude being a burthen.' To deprive me of the gratitude which I trust I feel to those to whom I stand indebted, would be to deprive me of most of my happiness."

"Oh!" said Montfort, catching up the glow from Maria's face, "it is *one* of the sweetest feelings." He laid such a stress on *one*, that it naturally made his hearer think of other sweet feelings; with which, it appears, they both of them somewhat confounded gratitude.

Maria now spoke with much more confidence. She had gained strength and support from its being near the hour of prayer. Happy are they who thus hail that hour as a refuge and resource! The only truly happy! Some may call this cant. If men so call it, my only answer is, that it is a matter of indifference to me what they think, except in as much as one would wish all to think rightly. If any woman leans to this opinion, I would tell her, that although not very old, I have tried many ways to attain happiness, but, baffled and tortured, have been forced to confess at last that what the holy say is true. This is no boast on my part, for, alack! alack! there is a wide difference between being what we ought to be, and only knowing what we ought to be.

As this sacred hour approached, Maria felt as if more drawn under His wings who alone can shelter. She knew it a weakness to suppose that He would less surely protect at one time than at another those who deserve His protection; but it was a weakness she would not now give up for the

best strength. She felt, not as if earthly feelings had less power over her, but as if heavenly had greater. She did not love her lover and her father less; but, from the sure and certain hope of at length meeting them where they should part no more, she could have at that moment borne their present loss better. In this hour Maria did feel confidence in spite of the reproaches she uttered against herself in her lectures; for she never could persuade herself, that, whatever her errors might be, she did not wish and try to act rightly, which she knew, although not sufficient for men, would be accepted of God; and this had at length such an effect upon her, that before they went to sleep she became the more cheerful of the two.

CHAPTER XI.

> But now lead on;
> In me is no delay; with thee to go,
> Is to stay here; without thee here to stay
> Is to go hence unwilling.
>
> MILTON.

AND now the morning really came when they were to part from the shelter they owed so much to—that shelter which had given life to one; and, if not given, at least confirmed, a new being to both; for love is a new being!

As they had agreed to start very early, Montfort was out at his toilet whilst it was yet dusk. Maria immediately got up and put the things they were not again to use in the same order as usual, for so her feelings prompted her to leave them:

she sank down upon Montfort's bed and kissed it, and every thing that had been of use to him in his extremity shared the same favour.

One more breakfast—a hasty and silent one—under their tree, on which Maria thought it very hard that Montfort had never cut her name,) and the sound met her ears which she knew they must soon hear, but which nevertheless startled her, "Come, dear Maria! it is time." Without replying, Maria went into the hut for a moment, cast her eyes once more round,—came out; Montfort drew her arm through his, and they did not speak again until they had walked a considerable

good opportunity to make her now solemn-looking features relax a little, and therefore declared he would not give her any thing to carry except the arms, with which, when she still insisted, he decked her out, protesting he had never seen so fierce and assassin-like a looking person before; in fact, that he wondered Li and he did not run away from her.

Maria saw for what this nonsense was intended, and soon began to talk.

But before she begins to talk, I must take advantage of her silence (as it is not a very common thing with her), and say a word or two for myself.

I have declared Maria thought it hard Montfort had never cut her name on their tree. That I must confess was a little idea of my own, for she was quite aware that since the days of Orlando this had been one of the most approved methods of discovering a passion, and therefore his doing so would not very well have accorded with a concealed lover; but nevertheless she did once, whilst sitting under it very happy, think that she

should like to have their names cut where they had spent so many hours together. Ay! and had she told the truth, it would have been that she wished them joined together, and surrounded by hearts and darts, and true love-knots and turtle-doves, and "the further we fly, the faster we tie," and all that a village girl thinks sentimental. These were the very thoughts of a Queen; so true is it that love has nothing to do with sophistication. Other feelings,—pride, vanity, ambition,—bear us away from simple nature; but love leads us back to her altar, blushing and trembling. He who knew human nature best, never spoke more truly of it than when he made the lover duke long for

"The song we had last night:
Mark it, Cesario; it is old, and plain:
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chaunt it; it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love,
Like the old age."

I think I have somewhere made out love to be all artfulness instead of all simplicity. I hardly know which is the truth; but there are so many contradictions in it that I am by no means sure it is not both.

I must also take advantage of Maria's continued silence (for who can say when such a thing shall happen again?) to mention another subject.

It has been hinted to me that people in general make some excuse for their heroes and heroines falling in love, and give a "why" and a "wherefore" for their doing that which it was very natural they should do; and that I ought to follow the example. I shall do no such thing! Had they not fallen in love with each other, then indeed an excuse might have been required, and it would have puzzled me to have made a good one. If Maria had not loved Montfort, she ought to have been ashamed of herself: and what makes me think this would have been the case is, that she was not at all ashamed of loving him; I do

not mean that she was not all blush about it! but that she never could bring herself to think it was wrong. To be sure, she did not try, being so perfectly convinced that it was right. And as for Montfort, had he not loved Maria, I would rather have poisoned him than written about him.

But now I think of it, I will make a defence for them—as unnecessary defences are sometimes made—just to show how clever I, the defender, am.

In the first place, spending such a time together as they had done in the hut would have stolen the heart of even a tailor, or, in more appropriate phrase, would have "cabbaged" it. Their hearts, to be sure, were not of the sickly sentimental sort; but neither were they of the quality of the nether millstone, which sometimes, when I am in a rage and very wicked, I think mortal hearts ought to be, to enable them to stand the wear and tear of this world. It required that a swain should give Maria something more than a languishing look and a sigh before she could fancy

herself in love with him—it would have been more likely to produce laughter than love; yet, it may be recollected, she had declared that she thought it necessary to human happiness for the heart to have something near it to rest upon. And Montfort echoed her words; but with an echo something like Paddy Blake's—not exactly a repetition. He said, in much more pompous phrase, "Why doth the miserable beggar, whom all else shun, share the crust he can but hardly spare with that wretched cur? Because a "greater power than we can contradict" hath said, "thou shalt love!" Now Montfort had nothing else to love, and Maria was surely better than a long-backed cur!

But had their hearts still resisted, sufficient yet remained to have bowed them down before the altar of the "Lord of folded arms." Why, the very powers of Heaven seemed leagued against their peace. When storm and tempest howled around, must he not shield and protect her? and must she not cling closer to her sole support?

But when the moon was up—there was no standing the moon!

Fancy such a creature as Maria lying asleep under your watch and safeguard—the Lady of the night, who is not only a real lady herself, but who makes every thing she shines upon look lady-like too, throwing her holy rays around her! Why a —— would have become spiritualised, and a —— have gained softness. To talk of giving the protection of a brother to such a being is very easy; and full as easy is it to do so; but to retain the feelings of one, and no more, is not so easy. Maria, too, had her trials in this sort, and one of them would have made a picture, had I ability to paint it. However, I must stop; for I am now trying to take too much advantage of Maria's wonderful silence, and beginning to tell of things that have not yet taken place. I will therefore let her tongue loose, and speed them on their way.

Maria had somewhat resisted being dressed up in arms, which made Montfort say, "For shame, Maria! Have you not given up all power to me again?"

"No, I did not give you the power to make me ridiculous!"

"Because neither you nor any body else could do that."

"That is the way poor women are always treated," said Maria, looking quite *up*. "When we resist, you throw us a little flattery to put us in good-humour, just as I should give Li a bone; but it is treating us with great contempt, and I won't bear it. I expect to be treated as I deserve, and I am quite certain I don't deserve that."

Montfort by no means wished her to be treated as she deserved, for in his opinion that could not possibly be on earth: however, he did not think it necessary to explain this to her, but said, "Then, by virtue of my authority, I order you to be made ridiculous!"

"There is, of the two, less nonsense in that;" and she forthwith submitted, but rather against her inclination; and if my reader cannot guess at her reason for this, as she knew it was done to make her laugh, I must explain it to him—it was

because she thought it might make her look masculine. Now her weakness may be forgiven, if, of the two, she would rather have been found out committing a fault than have looked masculine in the eyes of her lover—for what more disgusts a man of good taste? and what lady ever thought her lover was not such?

But it was a foolish idea, for the girl might have known, that had not Montfort been well aware it could not have had this effect, he would as soon have thought of tarring and feathering her.

When Montfort had told Maria how fierce she looked, and that he wondered he and Li did not run away from her, she turned round to her pet and said, as she patted him on the head, with her face rather made up for a smile than smiling, "Ah! my poor dog! You have a great deal more sense than your master!" and then she looked as if she could have bitten her tongue off.

Had I been near the young lady at the time, I should have told her it was her own fault, and that if she chose to let her tongue remain so long

without speaking, she must expect it to blunder when it began again.

The mistake, however, did no harm, for Montfort did not find it out; and had he even remarked the words more than he did, I do not think he was metaphysical enough at the time to have traced them up to the thoughts and feelings which they sprung from; and therefore the blunder would still have been no blunder to him.

Nevertheless, I may tell my reader what it was. Maria loved to consider herself so wholly his, that she looked upon herself, if I may so express it, as his spiritual wife; and every thought connected with him had reference to this idea: she had, therefore, in her own mind, endowed him in accordance with the laws of most nations with all her worldly possessions,—which, poor girl! were not at that moment very large, Lion being the chief part of them. But that was no matter, for giving in this sense was giving, whether it was a share of a kingdom or a share of a crust; and, according to this rule, she being Li's mistress,

Montfort was Li's master; and so, without thinking of it, she had called him. It is strange that that should not have struck Montfort at all, which, to Maria's fears, seemed little less than the heinous offence of having made him an offer.

Montfort had walked so well to their first rest, that Maria did not object to his afterwards carrying all the things except those Lion was the bearer of, which he took some trouble to tie and stick about him so as to have his good arm at liberty. "Ah! he does apprehend some danger still, I see," thought Maria, "although he tells me the contrary." But she was quickly relieved from her fears, when a short time afterwards he said, thinking, or pretending to think she looked a little tired, "I am perfectly recovered! but I shall not think myself so until I again feel you making use of my strength for assistance, instead of my leaning on yours."

"I really do not require it yet," replied Maria, as she took his arm; "but I suppose I must convince you that you are well."

When they had done a rather, but not very, short day's journey, they came to where the mountain ridge sunk suddenly into deep woody vallies; the hills between which might, in most countries, have aspired to be called mountains themselves; but here, not only the disproportion of height, but their being all covered with forest, marked the difference between them and the bare monsters around them.

Although both agreed that it would be quite refreshing to get once more under trees, they did not think it prudent to venture down amongst them, as they could spend the night in security where they were, and of course could not tell what they might meet with below; and they hoped, on the morrow, to get through all the woody country, and reach the mountains beyond it before night. Fortunately, too, this evening was the opposite of the preceding one, and even so high up as they were, was quite as warm as they could have wished it.

Maria did at first miss the sheltering roof, and all that she had lately been accustomed to; but

when she thought she saw that Montfort missed them also, she exerted herself so much to make him forget, that she soon forgot them herself.

If they had before found the mountain air give them such appetites as to make them often laugh about it, exercise being now added to this cause had such an effect, that when supper was over, the remains of Maria's "poor thing!" had nearly disappeared. But this they did not mind, as they had enough left for breakfast, and after that Montfort was to forage for them, as he used to do. By the way, he told Maria that "her eating the kid so heartily, after having been so pathetic about it, was really too bad! and what he did not expect. He thought to have had it all between Li and himself."

Maria professed to have had some idea of not interfering with them, but then she knew, "if left to themselves, he and Li would have fought about it."

This conversation passed as Maria was in the act of putting a great lump of bread and meat

before herself, a still larger one before Montfort, and a huge mass before Lion.

"Why, Maria, you surely do not mean to devour all that!"

"Indeed I do! and if you do not make haste and eat your's, perhaps I shall come in for some of it."

"Quite shocking!" returned Montfort, "now I will tell you how a young lady ought to live. For breakfast, she should sip a little dew off a rose-leaf, and, if very hungry, eat a bit of the leaf itself. For dinner, ——" But here seeing that Maria was not paying the least attention to him, but very great to what was before her, he could resist no longer, and soon was the most busy of the three. Perhaps, too, he might have had some fears of her really putting her threat into execution.

For the benefit of my readers, I shall say what Montfort's real opinion on the important subject of eating was, as I think it the correct one. Fine ladies, and fine gentlemen, used, with the bad

taste natural to such persons, to pretend to hardly eat any thing. Now, a bad appetite is a sign of bad health; and although bad health is to be pitied, there is nothing so pleasing in the idea of it as to induce one to affect it. The reverse would be the much more excusable affectation, as the wish to give the impression of health and freshness is to be understood. This stupid fancy has nearly disappeared.

Very soon after their supper was over, Montfort said, "We must have no romanticising to-night,—no looking at setting suns or rising moons, although there should be a dozen of them: but as soon as I have made your bed, you must go to sleep."

Maria might have thought it a little hard to be sent to bed so early when she had not done any thing wrong, but she did not object to it for three reasons. 1st. *When she could not have her own way*, she found a pleasure in obeying Montfort, as it was a part of her fancied duty to her ideal lord and master. 2nd. She *was* a little tired, although

she did not own it. 3rd. The sooner she went to sleep, the sooner would Montfort consent to wake her, and take her place. She therefore only stipulated for assisting in collecting her bed.

Maria, with her legs in the sack, and bundled up in the cloak, made an odd figure in the daylight; but she consoled herself by telling Montfort that she should soon see him in the same situation; and was shortly sound asleep.

This first attempt at camping out again was altogether successful; and on the following morning, after breakfasting, they continued their way with their spirits as light as their provision-bag, in which there was nothing left but one little bit of bread, saved for Maria to eat during the journey, to keep up her strength.

If Maria was armed yesterday merely for amusement, to-day she had a brace of pistols stuck in the waist-belt, or rather sash, which made part of her peasant's costume, from a different motive—that she might be better disguised in case of meeting people down in the country they had to traverse,

for so common was the custom of carrying arm
that a man was more remarkable without th
with them. It also made Montfort more passa
in his appearance, for two brace of pistols,
addition to a carabine, was rather overdoing
thing, although one and a dagger were conside
quite correct.

They immediately began to descend, and s
got into the woods, Maria running down the sl
so fast that Montfort was obliged to scold her,
he feared she might get her legs into some hol
fissure, and meet with an accident. Such scol

enjoying every step, and finding out more beauties than ever before were discovered in such a scene. Light or shade, dense forest or open glade, it was all the same to them; it only seemed changing from one delight to another. You would have thought, to have heard them talk, that nobody had ever been in a wood before—that it was some new invention, or late discovery.

They did not meet any body for the whole morning except a boy with a herd of pigs; but this they were prepared for, as Montfort had reconnoitred the country well from the mountains, and perceived very few villages, columns of smoke, or other traces of inhabitants.

When they saw the herd, they began to think "what a very nice thing a roasted pig is!" but, fortunately for the boy and his charge, he told them that two or three miles further on the road they had been following there was a very good *auberge*. The boy also asked if they were going to —— against the fête; to which Montfort promptly replied "Yes!" and the moment

they got out of sight he wrote down the name of the village with his pencil, for fear of forgetting it, determining to make this their passport until they had proceeded beyond it, in case any more questions should be asked them.

When they had got a mile or two further, they were suddenly struck dumb with admiration and surprise at finding themselves, on turning round a hill, all at once on the shores of one of the prettiest little lakes in the world. It was a scene in which the different parts were properly balanced. The expanse of water was not so great as to give the hills an insignificant appearance, neither were they of sufficient magnitude to make the lake look like a slop-basin. There ran a bold and craggy range of heights at the back, whose lower sides were covered with forest, in parts close to the edge of the water, into which jutted some little head-lands crowned with noble trees, whose shadows were flung far out upon the surface. This is one of the great advantages of lakes over bays—of fresh water over salt—that trees frequently grow so close

as to hang over the one, but seldom dare to approach very near to the other. On the tideless shores of the Mediterranean, however, you do sometimes see it.

It was still rather early for them to stop for the night; but they instantly made up their minds to do so, as they could not find it in their hearts to pass so lonely a spot, and they had before given up all hopes of reaching the mountains ere nightfall, the distance having proved much greater than it had appeared. Montfort was also now convinced that they had got out of the track the boy told them of, as they had not seen an *auberge*, nor had he said a word about a lake: they therefore considered it their most prudent, as well as most agreeable plan to remain where they were—for Montfort to leave Maria in some secure place, and then go to seek provisions.

Maria did not say a word against this part of the arrangement, as she knew it was a thing that must be; but she would fain have made out a case, had it been possible, and had she only consulted

her own feelings as to the propriety and eligibility of her going with him. But although she did not say any thing, one who looked in her face might have seen a solemness come over it, and a knitting of the brow, slight in itself, but which spoke of such trifles as rend our very heart-strings. But the only person who could have looked in her face always made a point of looking the other way on such occasions.

They soon found a place of concealment, and Montfort said gaily, "Now I expect to find my warlike-looking little brother laughing when I come back! But it is no great matter, for when I do come, I will answer for his laughing at the quantity of provisions I mean to bring." Then calling Lion to him, who was lying down a few yards off, he said, pointing to Maria, "Li, mind I leave our charge under your guardianship!" Lion sat down and beat the ground three times with his tail, which might be conceived to intimate as follows: "Mind your own work—make haste and get us something to eat—and I'll mind mine."

Maria also said, not, however, explaining her meaning in the same way, "Giving me in charge to Lion is rather casting a reflection on my 'doublet and hose,' especially as it is at present guarded by two pistols; but I assure you, I do feel quite safe now I have him with me, and not at all in the fright I used to be; so pray do not overexert yourself to get back soon; for mind, it is still necessary to be careful of your strength."

Whenever Montfort called Maria "his little brother," or "his brother Paolo," (the name she passed by when they were amongst people, whilst in her male attire,) it was a sign that he was in a gay humour, or that he wished to make her so. He never now used the expression on common occasions, and, when in a pathetic mood, he would not have made her of the masculine gender for the world. Indeed, it then appeared quite as much as he could do to call her sister. Maria, too, had latterly dropped the word "brother" altogether, except when merry and laughing; or if, when her feelings were opposite

to this, she found it necessary to use it, to hide or colour an excess of thankfulness on her part, she preferred calling him her "more than brother," which she casuistically decided "could not be a brother at all." At first they had both used the term often, because each felt an inclination to be more familiar than their length of acquaintance would seem to authorise even under their uncommon circumstances. Now calling each other by the name under which they were sometimes obliged to pass, was an innocent way of accomplishing this end. It was also an innocent way of forgetting the difference of their stations in life. But their situation with respect to each other having made them better acquainted in a few days than, under ordinary circumstances, they would have been in as many years, and their unreserved and perfect intimacy causing them to totally forget adventitious circumstances, there soon became no necessity for this; other feelings, too, springing up in their hearts, "brother and sister," however sweet at first, had fallen into disgrace. If it be thought,

what they had substituted in their steads—Montfort sometimes venturing (on great occasions) to call her "dear Maria," for instance, was rather lover-like than brother-like, it must be recollected that they had agreed to consider it as the latter, and that they were by no means anxious to scrutinise the term very narrowly.

With respect to rank, the wild life they now led would alone have been enough to make them forget that; but love still more speedily caused this distinction to disappear; or, if I may so express it, it resolved them into their first principles. The Queen had disappeared, but the woman remained: they felt themselves equal before God, and alas! sighed that they were not so before men.

When Montfort first thought on this subject, he said to himself, "Maria naturally wishes me to treat her as an equal—any one under her circumstances would feel empty ceremony to be a heartless mockery. But am I not carrying it too far?—How can I carry it too far if she wishes it?—Her wishes are surely first to be attended to!

and as to real respect, there cannot possibly be any thing becoming the human form that would not pay her more real homage under her present misfortunes than if she were on her throne—misfortunes borne in such a saint-like manner, too!

With regard to Maria's being altogether such a saint as Montfort wished to make her out, I must beg leave to demur: at least, she is not showing one saint-like quality — patience, in any great degree at this moment, as she peeps out from the bushes, so anxiously watching his return. But there is no convincing some people! I have not a doubt, if Montfort knew this that he would think

Maria had bent down the bushes so as to make a peep-hole out of the leafy screen she was hid behind, and, to her great joy, she saw Montfort return long before she expected him, although her neck was already nearly stiff from keeping it so constantly in one position. But the little deceitful thing not choosing to be caught so anxiously on the watch, the moment he came in sight pulled up the branches into their original state, and began playing with Li's ears so quietly that when Montfort saw her he was almost piqued at her indifference. But if this was his first feeling, he was soon quite restored to himself by perceiving, when she gave him her hand, not a tremour, but a thrill which could not be disguised.

"I told you I should make you laugh," said Montfort, as Maria smiled.

"But what have you got?" asked she.

"You shall see," replied Montfort, triumphantly.

Cheese, salt-fish, dressed meat, olives, and three huge loaves of nice fresh brown-bread, were

displayed to Lion's and Maria's devouring eyes.

"That speaks for itself," said Montfort, pointing to the wine-skin; "but I have also got something to drink it out of;"—and he produced a little horn cup.

"But were you not afraid to buy so much at once?"

"No! I said there was a party in the woods, on the way to the fête, that I had been sent to get provisions while the others slept, and that we were going on further as soon as we had rested."

"But what possessed you to bring so much wine?"

"I was afraid to buy less; for they would naturally think that the number of men who could need so much to eat would at least require that quantity to drink;—but you know we need not finish it to-night, and to-morrow we can take some on our journey, and with the rest pour a pure libation on the ground, or into the lake, to the goddess of its lovely waters."

"Ah! now we have plenty to eat and drink, we begin to get poetical, and to think about the beauties of nature again!" said Maria, laughing.

"And very naturally," replied Montfort; "for although all the morning, until we got very hungry, we talked of such scenes as this as if nothing else were necessary to happiness, yet we cannot eat hills or woods."

"But we can drink lakes," said Maria, going towards the water with the cup in her hand.

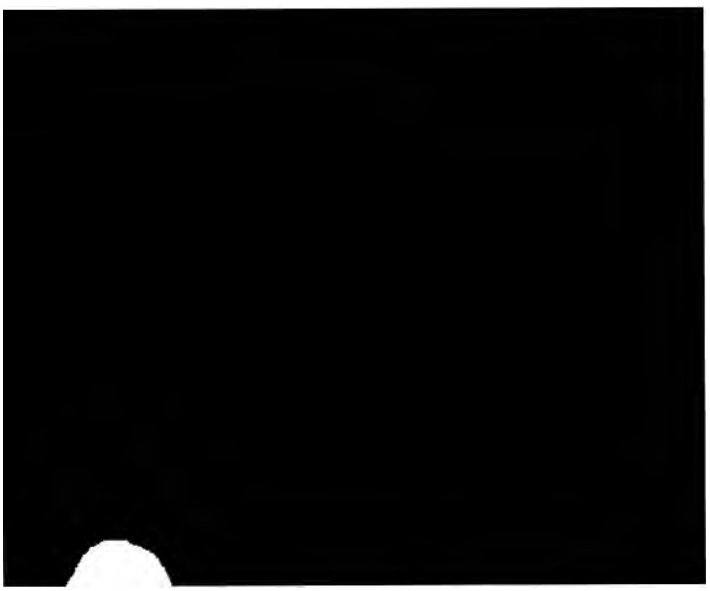
"Not whilst we have wine," interposed Montfort, "and not until you have eaten."

"Oh, you need not be one bit afraid of my appetite, I assure you," replied she, as they sat down to their dinner.

Maria wished to have taken possession of one of the little wooded headlands; but Montfort, although he did not apprehend any danger, was too much of a general to venture into a place where their retreat might have been so easily cut off. They therefore chose their lair on the



edge of a little bay shut out from view of the green lake by two beautiful miniature promontories overlapping, and hidden on the land side by luxuriant arbutus and myrtle.



CHAPTER XII.

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—
All heaven and earth are still: from the high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain coast,
All is concenter'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

BYRON.

WHEN dinner was over, there was yet a good while until evening, which Maria proposed to fill up by fishing. Montfort, amongst his other contrivances, had furnished himself with a few hooks and a line, thinking it by no means impossible but that, on some occasion, a mountain stream might furnish them with a repast which no other part of the mountain would: bait they could never be at a loss for, as the *unsophisticated* fish of that



[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

! make haste! I believe I've got a most
'

en Montfort ran up—still not quite convinced
he wonderful event had actually come to pass—
pushed the rod into his hand with a sort
dder, her face expressing up an elegant sort
g quite pale. He remembered in talking to
onster that had terrified all the town, and
anding it was merely some curious animal
the book out of its mouth as gently as pos-
and, at Marie's request, threw it back into
ke again: he then, of course, inquired what
', and said, "Why, you told me just now
ked fishing very much."
Well, so I do, as long as I don't catch any
."

wild region would not refuse to bite at a scrap of the coarse red lining of his peasant's jacket.

Montfort was rather surprised to hear Maria make the proposal, and told her he was sure she would not like it; but when she said she was sure she should, he, of course, had nothing further to urge, and to fish they went.

Maria, mistaking the delight of having any employment with such a companion in so beautiful a spot as they had chosen, for the pleasure of fishing, was much pleased for a time, although they were unsuccessful. Montfort had commenced instructing her in the art, albeit his own knowledge extending no farther than to be quite clear on one point—that it was necessary to put the hook in the water before the fish could bite at it.

"We shall never get even a nibble," at length said Montfort, solemnly.

"It is only owing to your awkwardness," replied Maria: "let me try."

And, strange to say, she had not taken the stick honoured with the name of a rod, more than a mi-

However, I will not say that the knowledge (from their now possessing so large a stock of provisions) of there being no necessity for Montfort to run any risk for some time which she should not have to share with him, had not also some effect in making Maria cheerful; and his spirits always rose as her's did.

They now sat where they commanded a view across the lake, and Maria said, "You surely cannot be such a tyrant as to think of making me go to bed very early to-night! You know I had plenty of sleep last night, and very little walking to-day. I tell you, I positively will not go to sleep if you do!"

Montfort was amused at her vehemence, but shook his head.

"Well, you shall find, you ill-natured thing, that, though you can make me go to bed, you cannot make me go to sleep. Recollect, it passed the power of even the great governor of Bastrana to make a man sleep in prison; and I am determined to keep my eyes open, on purpose to vex you—and to look at this beautiful lake;—so you may as well let me stay up."

"Very Serene Highness," that she broke the rod across her dutiful subject's head, to the no small amusement of both. So ended their fishing.

And when day at length began to close, never did it close upon a lovelier scene, or upon those who were more capable of enjoying it; for both were in delightful spirits, but not from a cause which associated with what was around them, for there was nothing whatever of the romantic in it: it was from the downright vulgar one which I have already mentioned, of having plenty to eat and drink.

Let no high-born damsel toss up her head at the idea of such a thing as a dinner having an effect upon the spirits of a Queen, until she herself has undergone a little starvation, which may alter her opinion wonderfully. I have been informed, on very good authority, that both kings and queens eat and drink as we do, and that they have been known to get quite cross at having been kept waiting for their dinners; but this I won't vouch for, although I firmly believe the first assertion.

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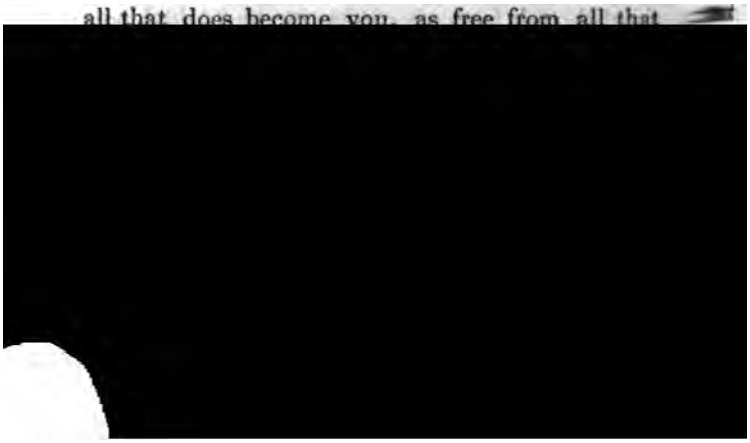
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After explaining that he could make her turn her face towards a rock or a bush, in which case her keeping her eyes open would be no particular amusement, he did own that he thought she could not require any extraordinary quantity of sleep, which Maria interpreted into—"she might stay up as long as she chose."

There they sat, talking as great nonsense as if they were at a fashionable rout, only laughing a great deal more than it would be thought proper to do on such an occasion in England. Montfort insisted on Maria's drinking a second cup of wine. "A pretty thing it will be," said she, "if you bring me to my father quite accomplished in the art of tippling—a complete toper!"

"I shall bring you to your father, as perfect in all that does become you, as free from all that





comes into one's head, and the tongue takes the liberty of uttering it without permission —or rather, in spite of ourselves. Maria rallied first, and said, with a laugh and a little blush, "Come, come, sir! Is this keeping your promise, —not to flatter me on any subject except my courage, whilst I am under your care?"

This "under your care" was a phrase Montfort loved so much to hear, that it had always the effect of making him silent with delight for a moment; but he soon said, "Courage is a subject on which I think it will rather go against your conscience to flatter me, after what you have seen to-day."

Maria now laughed with her eyes and with her heart, as she replied, "I should have thought your conduct downright affectation, had I not seen the real fright you were in; and had I not recollected that nothing mortal could daunt another valiant soldier whilst fighting his foes, except — the face of a white horse. But no! there was no mistake in your—" (continued she, mimicking) "'Oh, Maria! let us go away!' as I

ed the deadly enemy that would have pu
ghty hero to flight, had he not been protect
y a still more mighty heroine."

This alluded to a scene which took place in t
morning, when they had sat down on the tru
of a fallen tree to rest. Montfort had a mo
terrible antipathy to a spider; and a great blac
hairy monster crawled out of the trunk close
him: crawled is not the expression, for i
motion was so rapid that it seemed rather to dr
He started up in such dismay that it quite frigh
ened Maria, until she knew the cause. She w
then going coolly to take it up and throw it aw
nearly dislocated her shoulder, f
lled her

then two to the right, and keeping his eyes fixed with an expression of concentrated horror on the "villain he did not love to look upon," but could not help it. He then added the pathetic appeal above mentioned, "Oh, dear Maria! let us go away!"

When this was over, it made them both laugh a good deal; and Maria declared she was so delighted to have such a quiz against him, that he never should hear the last of it—which had a contrary effect upon his vanity to that of mortifying it: for, knowing that in reality Maria looked upon him as much more valiant than Hector and Achilles, both put together, he felt pleased at her badinage on the subject. He hardly knew why, but it flattered him.

To Maria's mimicry, he replied, "But if I am not to flatter you, you have no right to compare me and my spider to Henry the Fourth and his white horse."

"Oh!" replied Maria, trying to look innocent, "I did not consider that a breach of contract, as

I thought you would set the flattery down to his side instead of yours."

"Am I so vain as all that, Maria?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, I do not know that you have an over-abundance of positive and direct vanity (although you have quite enough of that); but you have a great deal of round-about vanity. If you do not make yourself out to be the first of mortals, you fancy your friend to be such; which is only self-praise in disguise, as their good qualities, of course, are reflected on him to whom such perfections condescend to be friends."

"Well then, for the future, I will think my friends the worst in the world — at all events, I know one whom I shall have a very bad opinion of if she abuses me so."

Maria's speech made an impression on Montfort which she did not intend: it made him muse for a while; for he began in earnest to consider if it had not some truth in it. "But, no!" thought he, "that cannot be the case! I do not think the better of myself on that account; for I do not

think myself worthy of such friends!—for instance, how unworthy of the one who is nearest (he might as well have added dearest) to me!"

But although her speech was not attended with exactly the effect she wished, she yet had an object in making it—or rather, as we have for most of the speeches we utter, a half object—a motive appearing in the distance, but not very clearly made out even to ourselves.

What prompted Maria thus to speak was, that she truly wished Montfort had not quite so high an opinion of her. She had a tolerably good opinion of herself, but she knew that poor Montfort's had gone beyond all bounds; that he thought her far better than any thing that ever existed before, that was mortal, and only mortal. Now this gave Maria serious concern, "for what human being," said she, "can stand such a notion? With such an idea in his head, the more he knows me, the more shall I sink in his opinion."

It was at this fancy of his that Maria's speech

glanced, but was not seriously aimed. This object showed itself to her mind through the haze, but she hardly expected her almost random shot to hit, or do any good if it did.

By his reflection on the subject, it appears that Maria was quite right not to suppose much good would result from what she said. Poor girl! It would have been difficult indeed to have lowered his opinion of her; and, in fact, the attempt would have been a practical bull, for the more she tried to pull it down, the more would she in reality have raised it up. Had she said, "Montfort, I wish you would not be so silly; you think me something more than mortal, whereas the utmost praise I deserve is that of being a well-intentioned girl;" he would have raved out, "Why, this very humility stamps you as perfection itself!" I see no help for her. She must be contented to be an angel—at least in her lover's opinion. And, after all, 'tis no such very great hardship, but what happens to some of her sex every day!

After a little pause, Montfort said, "But could

you not find out some more amiable reason for my thinking my friends—that is, Maria, my *absent* friends!—so very good?"

"Perhaps I could if I were so inclined; but I cannot be amiable now—I can only be merry."

"Only merry? Quite the contrary! You are now getting so deep that I don't understand you; marking a difference where nobody else can see a distinction."

"In what?"

"In merry and amiable, as applied to you."

"Ah! that 's a relapse!"

And thus they went on, conversing gaily, until the rising moon had turned to silver the golden hues of evening. Then the hour had its effect upon those who were not enough refined to think there was any thing vulgar in giving way to their feelings, whether they led to laughter or to seriousness. I believe I am wrong—I do not mean refined—for their heads, and hearts, and tastes, and manners, gave them every claim to refinement; but fashionable is the word—in which line I fear I never shall

make any thing of them. They never will be fit to be introduced into good society! they are "past praying for" in that respect. I see no hope for them, the only radical cure for such being to carefully extract the brain and heart, and fill the cavities with those of a dandy, lizard, or some other cold-blooded animal; an operation, I am sure, they will not consent to submit to. They never could be made even to understand that enthusiasm is low, and an emotion little short of a crime. So far from this, if Maria only found a flower more than commonly pretty, she used to run to Montfort with it as if it were very nearly as valuable as the Pigott diamond; and when he discovered a beautiful view, from the manner he would hurry Maria to look at it, one would have thought there was a great chance of its running away. Now, how very bad this shows, when compared to the conduct of a high-born countryman of mine whom I once saw cast a first look up at St. Peters,—so languid, as if he "really had seen so many St. Peters, that he

was quite tired of them." I longed to give him a thump in the back!

But to return to the sitters by the lake, who themselves were turning from the lively to the serious, as naturally (only a little faster) as the caterpillar turns to the chrysalis; and who, if you only wait until to-morrow morning's bright sun shines out, I have no doubt will be as merry again as butterflies. Now, however, their conversation took its colouring from that which was around them, and deepened into subjects of greater interest, or they sunk into silence and meditation. They talked by fits, not of, but at, their future prospects; and the train of thoughts that this called up in Maria, deepened into gloom—as deep, compared to her former gaiety, as the dark shadow of the tree they leant against was to the now bright track of the moon on the lake, into the midst of which it was flung, making a gap of darkness.

This only lasted for a time, for when her eyes dwelt upon all the glorious host of Heaven which now came forth glittering in gold, and throned on

purple, like princes of the sky, she could not despond; and she pointed to them and spoke of hope to her lover, who, she saw, was gloomy too—not directly of their fondest hope; but to lead his mind to hope at all was to give it the tone she wished. Laying her arm upon his, as a real sister might have done, she said, "Does not this mighty work of exceeding love teach us to put confidence in the Being who created it? Does it not say, that he who made all this for his creatures will surely not leave his work incomplete, but will give happiness to those who deserve it? and if he does not see fit to give it here, they will be fully recompensed hereafter! Our dangers and our sufferings now seem to me to disappear, and I almost reproach myself for ever having looked upon them as such."

Ere she took off her arm, Maria felt that on which it rested tremble; but she received no answer. He who an hour before had been making kind or flattering speeches with impunity in the daylight, would not at present have ventured one of

them for worlds. A single sigh, he thought, would have said all that it was possible for him to say—and he put on an air as if no torture should wring that from him.

But not less dangerous was the utter silence into which they at length sank. Seeing the odds were so terribly against the resolution he had formed, Montfort determined to be especially circumspect; so he looked straight across the lake. However, as soon as he got into deep thought, which in such a scene there was no resisting, he began to forget his determination; and his looks wandered from one bright topped tree, or silvered crag, to another, each shining more brilliant than its fellow, and each of course bringing them nearer to the brightest of all objects in his eyes. Gradually did her lover turn round to Maria as flowers placed in partial darkness turn to that light they cannot live without. When he had reached the point of danger, there is no doubt he would have been recollected, and turned back again with renewed determination, but that he was electrified

by seeing a smile on Maria's face, although it was now bent on the ground most assiduously. "Maria!" said he, half inquiringly, without exactly knowing what he was about.

"What?" replied she, "you think it time for me to go to bed! Well! I believe it is!—good night!" and Montfort was left at his watch, pondering on that most unaccountable of all created things—a woman.

I cannot say that I am one bit astonished at Maria's smiling. I only wonder she did not laugh outright. She saw as plainly as he did—nay, much more plainly than he could see—all that was going on in his mind. I sometimes know in a manner that I cannot account for, and which, though pleasing, is almost startling, what is passing in the mind of a friend who happens to be present; and could often, before he speaks, tell what he is just going to say; and this, when previous conversation, or circumstances, would not appear to have thrown our minds at all into unison. How easy then is it to believe that

Maria should have divined her lover's thought, when their minds, and feelings, and circumstances, all harmonised!—when there was one cloud hanging over them, which reflected a rosy light, or threw a shadow, as the case might be, equally upon both?

And if Maria smiled, that smile was not from want of feeling: I caught it as it left her lovely mouth, and sent it to a chemist to be analysed. It contained nearly equal proportions of approbation, sadness, and triumph; but hardly a grain of mirth. These contradictory qualities puzzled the operator so much that he could not tell what to make of it, and at last came to the conclusion that I had sent him a sigh in mistake. But there was no mistake in the matter! The approbation was, that her lover did struggle with his passion—the sadness, that there was occasion for a struggle—and the triumph, that he struggled in vain.

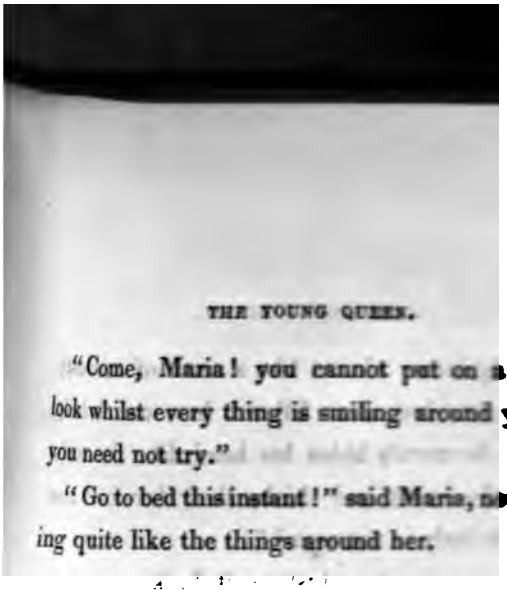
When Maria went to bed, she was foolish enough to blame herself for doing what she could not possibly avoid. "My seeing his love for me

so plainly seems almost like a want of modesty on my part; but, dear fellow! how can I help it, when he merely hides his head, like the silly bird of the desert, and thinks that therefore the rest of his body is not seen?"

The next morning, just as it broke, when it was their time for relieving watch, there was such a pretty mist upon the lake, that they could not help stopping a minute or two to look at it together. From the surface of the water arose a light haze, having the appearance of a thin gauze curtain, which disappeared so regularly and quickly when the first beam fell upon it, that it might be fancied to be drawn up. Maria said, "Nature must be going to give a grand opera. Curtain draws up. Enter Sun, solus."

"It really is too bad, Maria, that I should lose such an hour as this in sleep. I have a great mind to stay up and enjoy it with you instead."

"You may stay up and enjoy it; but if you were to do any thing so very wrong, I do not think you would enjoy it with me."



"Come, Maria! you cannot put on a serious look whilst every thing is smiling around you, so you need not try."

"Go to bed this instant!" said Maria, not looking quite like the things around her.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE YOUNG QUEEN.

VOL. II.

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THE

YOUNG QUEEN:

A TALE.

In that tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears.

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
JAMES COCHRANE AND CO.,
WATERLOO PLACE.
1835.



THE YOUNG QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

"An hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east."

"Hail, thou fair Heaven!
We house in the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do."

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Montfort was asleep, and Maria dabbling in the lake, she thought she had been a prophetess in speaking of Nature's Opera, for such a number of singers in the bushes she had never heard before, never before having been in so favourable a situation for it thus early.

In that hour of joy Maria could scarcely believe there was such a thing as inanimate nature. Every thing around her seemed to live. The

dewy blades of grass appeared to be lifting themselves up to meet the sun; and as the little bird shook the glittering spray, it seemed to her fancy as if the spray itself, "instinct with life," had thrown that shower of brilliants to the ground. From the tops of the trees, a vapour, like breath, arose. She quite exulted in her own existence, and in all the life that was about her.

But of all the enjoyers of the lake, Lion was foremost. There was hardly any keeping him out of it; and a dozen times in an hour, if he had not been stopped, would he have come and laid his wet head on Maria's knees. Montfort, on his waking, also discovered Maria enjoying it, in an odd way, it may be thought, for a young lady; he caught her in the act of throwing bits of stick and stones into it with all her might, for her favourite to swim and dive for. "How use doth breed a habit in a man!"—or woman! I do not mean that Maria had been in the habit of throwing stones; but the rough, wild life she had now led for so long, had taught her to do things she would

not before have thought of: being obliged to do so much for herself, and lately for her fellow-traveller, had given her the idea of doing whatever she felt inclined. This feeling made her conduct sometimes approach towards that of the sex whose dress she wore (nor am I altogether sure that the dress had no effect on her); and the very cause which might have been supposed to operate most against this, her having before been under greater restraint than persons in a lower rank in life, made her, on the contrary, run deeper into the opposite extreme. She was more the child of Nature, from having before been more kept down by art. Such would not have been the case, had not her feelings always been in opposition to her style of education; but for this, her spirit would have bent to its daily moulding; whereas now it sprung back the more strongly to its native state, for having been forcibly pushed aside. In fact, she had quite run wild.

Any thing really coarse Maria could not do, as coarseness proceeds from the mind, and into hers no such thought could ever enter; but what she

often did do would have made any one who had not, like her, broken loose from society, laugh as heartily at her as did Montfort, when he found her at her new employment. She did not mind his laugh one tittle; on the contrary, she enjoyed it. Although she had once been frightened at the thought of looking masculine in his eyes, she was not now the least alarmed on that score, for she instantly saw, in spite of the speech which accompanied it, that his was a laugh of sheer delight, without any mixture; and doing what pleased him, and doing what was right, were sadly confounded in her ideas.

"Now, Maria, are you not ashamed of yourself?" said Montfort, as soon as he could speak.

"No! not a bit!" replied Maria, with a toss of her nose in the air, as she stood, with a stone in her hand, precisely in the same attitude in which he had caught her, looking half-laughing and half-ashamed. The toss of the nose is to be understood as a little note of defiance, which must be added to her shame and laughter, to give a correct idea of her face.

"Then, why do you look so?"

"I do not know that I do look so."

"Oh fie! do not tell stories, Maria! But if you look so without knowing it, it is a greater proof still of your being guilty. Why, you wild girl! I shall be obliged to tell you how to behave at last. Fancy a young lady of such rank being taught how to behave by a rough soldier! I shall be quite ashamed to call you my sister, when you get on your woman's dress again; don't you think I shall?" said Montfort, holding out his hand for her to give him the stone.

"You shall not have it! and I will do whatever I like," said Maria, as she threw the stone into the water,—but not very far this time,—not now with all her might!—only just as I have seen a lady throw a stone at a pic-nic, by way of being rural.

Maria had a very unmanageable mind. It was of that quick kind, that a disagreeable thought would occasionally come jumbling in amongst her pleasing ones when least expected, and make a sad

revulsion; and now, when Montfort said "he should be obliged to teach her how to behave," it caught at the recollection of all the disgusting forms she had before been obliged to endure, and which she at this moment hated with all her heart.

This hating of ceremony and pomp was of her father's teaching, as well as of her nature's—at least he taught her to despise it, which, with an ardent mind, is nearly the same thing. He used to say to her, "Perhaps it is necessary (which he found it hard to make her believe), but, at the same time, a thing to be looked down on, (this was easy of belief) and, in some sort, even degrading to the person who is the subject of it, because, if really required, it shows the weakness of that nature of which he is part." Maria learnt the latter portion of the lesson so well, that when surrounded by the utmost state, she felt it as a mockery: and then her father thought it necessary to begin to try to unteach what he himself had taught, and was unreasonable enough, for a time, to hope to succeed; but he had just that degree of success

which teachers usually have who do not believe their own doctrines.

When the painful idea at present came into her mind, she thought to herself, "I was always convinced that the forms and ceremonies of courts were unnecessary, or, if necessary, at least unsuited to my nature; but now they will hang about me like chains; and if they are gilded ones, that will not make them the more bearable to me!"

Seeing her look so serious, Montfort said, "Maria, I must make you throw stones again, as that seems to be the only thing that can please you at this moment." The cloud then instantly passed away, and she ran off to get their breakfast; but before she had taken half a dozen bounds, she heard Montfort say, "Oh! hang you!" as her playmate came out of the water to follow her, giving Montfort such a dripping greeting as he bounced and splashed by him, that he nearly saved him the trouble of washing himself.

"What!" said Maria, stopping short in her

course, and with a most threatening look, although she was at the same time laughing at the duckling he had got; "hang Li?"

"I would rather hang Li's master!" said Montfort.

"I believe you would!" returned Maria; and took two more bounds, but then stopped again,—"and pray, Sir, who is Li's master—I should like to know?"

"Why, you called me so!"

"Did I? then I should not have done so!" and, as she thought of the cause of her blunder, she went to the right-about-face quicker than ever did fugleman, and continued her way with the speed of an antelope.

And Maria's speed was only equalled by her—oh! bless me! What was I going to say? Those provoking words, that, like Macbeth's witches, "palter with us in a double sense," often get me into a scrape! But I mean that such a run would have made any other girl pant for an hour; whereas Maria only drew one greater breath than

usual, a little flush passed over her temples, and you would not have known she had been running at all. The fact is, Montfort had got her into as good training as Captain Barclay himself could have done, without however having any idea of the ring—that is, of the prize-ring.

As a proof of what an excellent walker she had become, when first their wanderings began, she used to stop to drink at every stream they came to; but he had so completely broken her of this, that she could now walk for a whole day without feeling thirsty. Her step, too, would have been as springy at the end of a day's walk as at the beginning, but that, for private reasons of her own, she often chose to appear to require that support which she did not really stand in need of.

As I have shown Maria doing such a girlish, romping thing as throwing stones, I must in justice say (although I hope my reader has already found it out), that no one could be the reverse of this more naturally: and a woeful effect on poor

Montfort's heart it had, to see this apparently thoughtless, heedless girl take her place so decidedly when it became her to do so. If, in her wildest flights, any thing jarred upon her religious or moral feelings, or sense of propriety—if Montfort uttered a speech, without thinking, that was not in accordance with them, she would point it out to him, and lecture him with all the authority of a right-minded woman. And if this was preaching, it was such true preaching, that to Montfort it seemed to come direct from above: he listened to her as to a young priestess, pure, holy, and inspired. Then the absorbing interest she showed about him, that he should not only act, but always even think rightly on such subjects, joined to the implicitness with which she deferred to his judgment on all others, made him love her almost to distraction. He would on such occasions turn away from her, as if obliged either to do so, or to throw his arms about her and press her to his heart.

And if, to see one so capable of teaching, look to him, in all else, to be taught, raised Montfort in

his own opinion; the same feeling was produced in Maria as he hung upon her words, and listened to them as to those of an oracle. Although they did not agree to flatter each other, they did so with all their might. There was no danger, however, of this spoiling Maria, for on her flattery had lost its effect. She knew herself to be beloved; and what flattery can go beyond that? It includes all praise: any thing further would be cold compared to it. The gift of a flattering speech is thought little of by that person who has received the gift of a heart.

When Montfort had indulged himself in a delicious swim, and joined Maria at their breakfast, she said, "We must make haste and go away from this beautiful spot; as it is, I am sure I shall regret it."

"And I," replied Montfort, "have been just thinking how delightful it would be if we were forced to stay here some time."

"But I tell you," said Maria, looking quite jealous, "you must not, and shall not, like it as much as our own hut!"

"Would you not rather have spent the time here?"

"No: the shelter that rugged spot afforded us, like kindness from one whose appearance does not induce us to expect it, was more valued because the spot was rugged. I am sure I am more thankful for having received it there, than I should have been for it here: but this, I suppose, I ought not to own, as it is a weakness."

"But it is a weakness that makes the mind which bears it appear any thing but weak."

This was uttered in a sufficiently solemn manner, and therefore Maria did not call it flattery. Flattery is seldom found fault with, because seldom detected, when it approaches us with a grave face.

Although they talked of making haste, they yet lingered, loth to leave so much beauty which they might never look upon again. But they did leave it, threaded the woods, and, before the day was half over, were once more upon the moun-

tains—where they were received in a most mountain-like manner.

Early in the afternoon, as they were travelling on, they heard occasionally an ominous roll of thunder away amongst the more distant peaks, but rain had kept off so long that they hoped to escape it altogether. It came down, however, so violently, just after they had passed an opening in a rocky cliff, that they ran back there for shelter. They found it to be a cave, the mouth of which, under a projecting rock, was overshadowed by an enormous oak; the lower branches nearly shutting out the view of a mountain rising abruptly opposite, on whose precipitous sides huge rocks were stuck up as if for no earthly purpose but to tumble down again.

On every one who is in a wild mountainous country, it is incumbent to say something about Salvator Rosa. Indeed I can hardly reconcile it to my conscience to have put it off so long. But I gladly avail myself of this opportunity of saying, that the scene now before them was

"quite a Salvator;"—only that he would inev-
tably have placed a group of banditti under the
oak, which Montfort, and especially Maria, al-
though great lovers of the picturesque, would ne
have thought any manner of improvement.

When their eyes had become accustomed to th
gloom of the cave, they discovered the further e
of it to have been shaped into a rude altar
some hermit of the by-gone day, who, although
had fixed upon a spot retired in itself, had y
chosen one, as hermits often do, in sight of
habitations of men; for from it he could look do
on villages in the country below.

Why is this? Is it an involuntary lean
towards our kind, even when we ourselves th
we have given them up?

At first they looked about upon the d
green walls to see if they could find any ins
tion to tell them who had lived, and, perh
died there; but the thunder becoming louder,
Maria's face longer, Montfort led her as far
the door-way as he could; and she sat dow

the foot of the altar, with her hand clasped in his, for she was now beginning to get frightened as fast as she could.

They heard the heavy drops fall, clear and distinct, upon the oak without, and the wind blow in short hollow gusts; and then the silence was more marked when both wind and rain paused for a moment. Maria sat with her hand clasped in Montfort's; but not with her face turned away, or any thing that denoted consciousness of her situation. On the contrary, their eyes were upon each other, Maria's full of awe, and Montfort's looking encouragement.

At length a low rumbling noise began, and the earth trembled slightly around them: then came a heavy sound, as some loosened rock rolled into the valley below. Maria grew paler and paler, and stood up unconsciously. Montfort supported her, and they both looked as if prepared for the presence of some awful being.

At once the Spirit of the Storm seemed to cast himself madly before them. A flood of light

poured into the cave: a crash of thunder followed, such as is heard only amidst mountains—it burst amongst them, and they might be thought to rouse themselves and shake it from their sides indignantly; but a sound, more terrible than thunder, contended with it, rose above it, and at length that horrid noise—an earthquake's roar*—alone was heard. It seemed as if the angel of desolation were hurrying on, sweeping the earth with the besom of destruction—the hills shook to their very centres—the old oak groaned and crashed without—the everlasting rocks around them grated and splintered, threatening to crush them to atoms. Maria, abandoned to fear, threw herself into Montfort's arms, and hid her face in his bosom. Montfort bent over her for an instant; but his fears taking the direction of hers—that they might be buried by the falling rocks—he bore her to the

* I would have called it the "braying of an earthquake," as that, I think, is the nearest term, but I was afraid people might be uncivil enough to think of the braying of something else.

door; beyond which, however, he did not dare to move, lest they might meet the death they sought to avoid from the huge stones that rolled down almost incessantly from the crags above, or the smaller boughs of the oak, which were rent off and whirled aloft like so much thistle-down. Lion was fully aware of this danger, for, though much frightened, he did not venture out, but stood trembling by their sides.

The shock did not last many seconds—but they were seconds that left ages of recollections—and almost as quickly passed away the storm; so that the tears were still on Maria's eye-lashes when she blushed at the situation she had been in, and tried to smile at her fears.

"The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away."

That "breath, all incense," which, poet though he was, he loved a thousand times better than even the breath of morn, whispered to him, "You cannot now praise my courage! It did indeed give

way; and had I not had —— had I been alone, I think I should have died of fright." And if the cheek was not "all bloom," as she said this, her lover was quite contented at seeing it "all blushes."

"I must not allow you to condemn yourself, Maria, because the courage of a young girl was not immoveable, where that of man never is so. Let no one flatter himself that he has no fear, until he has passed the ordeal of a severe earthquake. I once had an opportunity of seeing its effect on those who for years had waded through blood and slaughter to victories with which the world has rung; and there was not one face that did not turn pale,—nor do I doubt that mine was like them. I know nothing so terrible. It affects me much more than a storm at sea—perhaps because confidence is shocked. A storm at sea is something we expect; but when the old earth begins to rock, we not only feel frightened, but ill treated."

Montfort ended his speech smiling, but resum-

his seriousness as he continued, "I should have been in a much greater fright now if you had not been with me: but vanity, although often called a trifling feeling, has wonderful power. I am ashamed to be, and therefore I cannot be, a coward before a woman."

"I will not hear you attribute good conduct to a bad motive, even in yourself," said Maria.

"Then, perhaps, you will let me say, that it was fortunate for me your courage did give way a little, as it served to sustain my own."

"That, though perhaps not exactly the truth, I can believe to be something like the truth. I think it possible I might have been less a coward if the only person beside me had been one still more helpless."

After a pause, Maria asked, "But why should I have been in so much greater a fright now than when in danger of falling into the hands of those I dreaded worse than death? Yet, had I to take my choice this instant, I would much rather die by such a visitation, than be put to death by my fellow-creatures!"

"So it is, Maria! I can fully enter in
feelings, although I cannot account for
Perhaps, in an earthquake, before we ha
to think, we feel as if brought in contact v
Deity himself—as if He who made us w
antagonist; and, therefore, against Hi
courage does not dare to rise: but it is
when opposed to mere mortals like oursel
with them we can contend; and any atten
contending—nay, the very idea of doing so—c
a certain degree of courage. This I take
our first feeling; but when we have time to re
we are aware that whatever fate awaits us
the Being who rules the elements, it is de
mercy—from man, perhaps, in hate."

Maria shook her head, as if she were not
fied with this explanation, but could not g
better.

There was one object in the cave to
Maria's heart turned as soon as their per
over. Shut out so long from public worshi
rude altar reminded her of it, and produced

thing of that sort of feeling which would have been a heathen's, had he met with his household gods in a strange land: and, although it is not the fashion for ladies to lead gentlemen to the altar, yet now Maria did so—not however with any idea of marrying Montfort out of hand, but only to return thanks for their preservation.

Maria then wished to have gone on their way, but the fear of not getting a dry place for her to sleep after the torrent of rain that had fallen, induced Montfort to decide on their remaining there for the night. Maria could hardly help shuddering as she looked up at the most uncomfortable-looking green mouldy walls of rock, which certainly showed the choice to be a hard one, when persons could decide on spending a night in such a place for fear of not getting one so good elsewhere.

Montfort immediately began to collect stones, and pile them up inside the cave, facing the opening, so as to have one corner of it well sheltered, at least. He then, after a great deal of

difficulty, made a large fire in this snug corner, the wood being much easier collected after the late storm than made to burn. In the midst of his operations, he uttered a most energetic and pathetic lament—"What are we to do for a bed for you, for the leaves must be wet?"

"Oh! is that all? I can sleep very well upon the ground.'

But before she had finished her speech, short as it was, he had gone out to collect ferns to dry by the fire, which operation succeeded tolerably well; for by the time they were required to be used, they were in such a state that he did not appre-

CHAPTER II.

"A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep."

SHAKSPEARE.

"The lady watch'd her lover."

BYRON.

WHEN night came on, and they were sitting round their blazing fire, this scene of gipsy life struck them much, as it was new to both. The smoke fortunately found a draught out over the top of the dry wall, and did not annoy them beyond laughing point, if that can be called annoyance: now and then they got a puff in their faces, which only made them cough a little, and laugh more—except Li, who thought it no manner of

joke, and was quizzed for looking sulky on the occasion.

And they quite caroused, (so Maria said,) as became gipsies, for the air and sides of the cave were so damp, that Montfort made her drink more wine than she had ever done at one time in her life before. In fact there is no knowing to what extent he might have carried his kindness, had not she protested that she was apprehensive of not long knowing how to conduct herself.

As the shadow of Maria's light and graceful figure was thrown upon the damp mildewed wall by the blaze, it seemed strangely out of place. The rest of the group round the fire, however, were not out of keeping—the huge shaggy dog, and Montfort's bold bearing, as he sat with his carabine beside him, and pistols in his belt; but Maria's disguise scarcely served to make her one bit more in character with the rest, than if she had not had it on. The only fault Montfort ever found with her was, that she was the most difficult person in the world to disguise. I do not

know if his opinion was correct, but he was most religious in holding it, "That if you were to put her in a bag, she would still look like a lady."

Their conversation was admirably suited to the scene, being naturally all about earthquakes and horrors.

"The mountains have received their admirers rather too roughly," said Montfort.

"Ah!" replied Maria, "that is, perhaps, because we proved somewhat false to them at that enchanting little lake."

"Then if this was to win our love back again, I must say that I do not wish for any more such wooing. It puts one in mind of the savage we read of, who gets at his mistress's heart by breaking her ribs with a club."

Maria did laugh, but her features soon recovered their earthquake solemnity again; and it was shown what was in her mind by her shortly afterwards saying without preface, "Of all visitations, *it* surely is the most awful!"

"And I know not when it is most awful,"

returned Montfort, taking up the subject in the same manner, "whether when it comes, as it did to-day, in storm and tempest; or, as I have known it, during a serene and beautiful moonlight night of a southern sky. I think it seems more cruel then. Did you know what it was at first?"

"Yes, instantly! but I was first struck by Lion's fright, for he was affected in a way in which I never saw an animal before."

"I did not look at him," returned Montfort; which was natural enough, but he need not have said so, as it prevented Maria from giving a full and true account of how a dog stands an earthquake, for she instantly stopped short in her speech from a consciousness of who he did look at.

'Tis strange how great and mean things are brought into juxtaposition in conversation—old shoes and earthquakes. The former, I admit, is a matter not so generally interesting to the world as the latter, but to Maria and Montfort it might have been a matter of full as much consequence.

When they had finished talking of their terrific subject, Montfort, like Satan,

"void of rest,
"His potentates to council call'd by night:"

that is, Maria and he held a sad and solemn consultation on the bad state of repair of her shoes—her best and worst, poor girl! Montfort insisted on looking at them. If it was with any idea of getting a peep at her pretty little foot, he was disappointed, for she drew it back behind her as she was sitting, only giving one shoe at a time, so that he could no more see it than if it had been hid under petticoats. Nothing could be much worse than the condition they were in—gone at the toes, going at the heels, and threatening to go all over. It was evident they could not hold out more than two or three days, and they had no hope of finishing their journey in less than thrice that time.

"Nay!" said Montfort, "I think they must have blistered your feet already!" Oh, the villain! he did not want to look at them too, to be sure!

Whether he did or no, he took Maria's word for

it that they had not done so; and with respect to two of the worst breaches in the shoes, he cobbled them up with pieces of leather cut from his own, sewed on the outside; the work being too hard for Maria's fingers.

When Cupid is determined to have his own way, it is of no use trying to thwart the little gentleman, for have it he will. Had Montfort been all ice instead of all Etna before, this new trade of his must have set him on fire. Only fancy! mending the shoe of the very prettiest foot that ever fell upon this earth, light and silent like a flake of snow! Conceive the sweet sensations it must have communicated through the fingers' ends up to the heart—the trepidations it must have occasioned: the trepidations, however, can scarcely be looked upon as an advantage, as they several times occasioned the stocking-needle to enter his fingers instead of the upper leather.

Had not Maria kept a good look-out on him, I am sure Montfort would have kissed the shoes, although they had not been properly cleaned for a



month. But, notwithstanding that he bore them such love, he determined on trying to get a new pair on the following day,—much against Maria's wishes, as she wanted to make these do as long as possible, and then trust to fortune for a supply, rather than he should run any risk in procuring others.

But Montfort had reasons of sufficient weight to make him decide against her wishes, although she told him, after he had explained them most carefully to her, that she believed it was only for the pleasure of doing so. He feared that to walk a whole day in a new pair of shoes would certainly hurt her feet; but if he got a pair immediately, she could walk half an hour in them the first day, an hour the second, and so on until they were fit to use altogether; and the old ones might be coaxed to last sufficiently long for that purpose. The village also where the fête was to be on the morrow, lay at the foot of the hills, apparently not far from their intended course; and as there would be doubtless many strangers there, it was not

likely that he would be remarked if he were to venture amongst them.

After these important affairs had been settled, Montfort carried all the blazing sticks from their fire out of the cavern, and made Maria's bed with her feet towards a great heap of live embers. She promised not to dream of an earthquake if she could help it; and as she knew, in case one did happen, that Montfort would be instantly at her side, she went to bed with some degree of confidence.

But the night passed off quietly; and Maria, in spite of a gloomy cavern, damp walls, a hard bed, and dread of being crushed to death, slept as well as she had ever done.

Not so Montfort; when it came to his turn to lie down, after a few hours of tossing and turning, dreaming of being buried and dug up again, he arose nearly as unrefreshed as he had gone to rest. The cool air of the morning, however, joined to a good breakfast, and his own strength, soon made him forget his want of sleep; and they went on

their way rejoicing that the weather was now exactly what they wished it to be.

When they had travelled about twelve miles, they found themselves at that point of their route lying nearest to the village Montfort intended to go to, but which now appeared at a much greater distance from them than they had supposed it would have been: Maria guessed it to be twenty miles off at least, and entreated him to give up all idea of the shoes. Montfort supposed it about half that distance, and, after hesitating for a moment at the thoughts of the possibility of his not being able to get back before dark, he determined to make the attempt at all events; intending to go towards it for half the time which remained of daylight, and if he could not reach it then, to turn back immediately. Maria argued, that he would over-exert himself, hurt his arm, and be very ill; and that at best it would only be throwing away his time and strength to no purpose, as she was quite sure it was impossible he could succeed: but when she saw she was not to

have her own way, she told him, that even if night did come on before his return, he was not to fatigue himself too much, for with Lion and the full moon she should not be the least afraid.

This journey was one of the most anxious and unpleasant Montfort had ever performed. The village seemed to run away from him: as he got nearer to it, it appeared more distant; but after finding out that Maria's guess was not further from the truth than his own, he did reach it within the time he had allowed himself, and found no difficulty in getting what he wanted. He also bought a few things for Maria which he could easily carry,—a little fruit, and some sweet-meats; and also some garments, whose names I need not mention, for himself and her, of the coarse materials of the country,—which, by the way, he had always done, as occasion offered; but this did not increase their travelling wardrobe, as, when they obtained new, they abandoned the old, Maria not being an expert washerwoman. Nevertheless, I must record, that even this task she

did perform once upon a time, when at their hut. Fancy a descending angel, with a clean shirt in her hand! Montfort, however, thought Maria had hardly ever looked more like one than when she brought him a garment of that sort, quite clean, but not otherwise well put out of hand.

"What, Maria!" said he, "have you done even this for me?"

"And why not?" replied Maria, almost choking from the swell of gratified feelings, as she saw the effect her kindness had on him—"Why not? Is it not a woman's place to do it?"

"Ay! but not a queen's."

"But, when there is necessity for it, it is a sister's, and that is the only title I wish you to recollect now."

The poor man was weak at the time, and when she left him to put it on, he was obliged to brush the back of his hand across his eyes, and man himself by saying, "This is unmanly!"

If Montfort found little enjoyment in his walk, whilst going, he liked it still less on his return.

After pursuing for some time what he took to be the right path, he found that it led away to quite a different part of the mountains; and when he discovered his mistake, he had already gone on so long in a wrong direction, that he thought there was no chance, with all the exertion he could possibly make, of being able to reach the spot where he had left Maria before day-light closed. Then came the terrible thought, that perhaps by the uncertain light of the moon, he might not be able to find the place again—of her being alone all night, and of her consequent fright and agony of mind.

For an instant he was almost overcome; but immediately recovering his presence of mind, he took the best observation as to his proper direction that the place he was in would admit of, and then hurried forward, running wherever the ascent was not too steep, or fatigue did not compel him to give over.

It was fortunate for Montfort that he was obliged to make such exertions, which in a great

measure prevented his mind from preying on itself; but as it was, he was nearly frantic at his own stupidity in not better marking the road.

Every now and then, he lost all traces of a path, when, still having sight of the mountain on which he had left Maria, he would rush desperately towards it, over ground, which at another time he could not have passed slowly without the utmost caution. Still he went on, unhurt, over rock and chasm, through bush and brier. His desperation seemed to be a charm to him. He rushed at what looked dangerous, and the danger disappeared. He bounded easily over every obstacle, as we sometimes appear to do in a dream, almost without any exertion on our own parts.

After the evening had become quite dusky, he reached a spot which he thought looked like the place where he had left Maria; then, so much was the appearance altered by the difference of light, he began to doubt if it was the same; and at length life seemed to die within him, as he fancied he discovered objects totally new to him.

He made the appointed signal, rather in despair than hope; and when he paused to listen for a reply, his heart beat so violently that he thought he should have fallen. "Thank God!" he exclaimed as he hurried forward at Maria's call, and in an instant stood at her side, trembling in a way which he could not conceal.

"Good heavens! what agitates you so?"

"Oh, I thought I should never find you; I thought I had mistaken the place."

"Sit down!" said she, dragging him down with all her might, as he seemed inclined to resist; and she ran and poured him out a cup of wine.

By the time Maria returned, Montfort had recollected himself, and said, "I have run so much up the hill that I am quite exhausted; but it will only last a moment. Have you been alarmed?"

"Not on my own account; but I began to think it was time for you to return."

This gives a faint idea of the hours of suspense which she had passed.

Their bivouac to-night was under a tree on the mountain side, in a place secure from observation, but from whence you could see all around. A few bushes grew about it, sufficient to give them a shelter, which, however, the delicious mildness of the air rendered almost unnecessary.

At their supper, Maria observed that Montfort could hardly keep his head up; it reeled with sleep. At one moment he made an effort, and his eyes were wide open; but the next, away went sight and sense headlong. He had gone between forty and fifty miles during the day, which, when strong, and in a tolerable country, he would have thought little of; but such miles, as far the greater part of them had been, were enough in his present state to make even him feel fatigued. In fact, he was tired to death; and his broken rest the previous night had added to his exhaustion.

When their meal was over, and they had eaten the fruit which Montfort brought for Maria, the latter seemed labouring for some time with some-

thing in her mind: at last, addressing him, she said, "Do I look in earnest?"

"You in earnest! But what is it about?"

"Have I not, in earnest, begged you to do a thing very important, or very foolish?"

"Never. But what——?"

"Then," said Maria, interrupting him, "will it be necessary to do what I shall now ask you, if it be for or against the one or the other?"

"If it were not interfere with your safety, I will

"I assure you have undergone a great deal more anguish in this than you ought to have done!

hand, and squeezed it harder than he had ever squeezed her's in his life, and said, "Now, I will not be put off with a laugh; but if you value my wishes in the least, you will not refuse me."

Montfort was almost afraid to utter the "No!" that was upon his tongue, for he did not know to what lengths her ardour to gain her object might carry her—perhaps, he dreaded her next step would be a kiss!

"Well, Maria!" said he, "do not hurry yourself—let us talk of it calmly."

"No," replied the energetic girl, "I will not talk of it calmly! for if you talk calmly, you will not do it."

"Then you want to hurry me into promising what I ought not to promise."

"I do not! I only want you to promise to do it, if your unprejudiced opinion decides that there is no reasonable apprehension of danger."

Maria was "all soul!"—not the "all soul" of the over-amiable Miss Wilhelmina, whose equally

thing on her mind; at last, addressing him, sh[illegible]he said, "Do I look in earnest?"

"You do indeed! But what is it about?"

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"Never! But what——?"

"Then," said Maria, interrupting him, "wi[illegible]vil you promise to do what I shall now ask you, if i[illegible]f i is neither the one or the other?"

"If it does not interfere with your safety, I[illegible] will!"

"It cannot! you have undergone a great deal[illegible]e more fatigue to-day than you ought to have done! [illegible] Will you lie down and sleep now, and let me sleep[illegible] afterwards?"

[redacted]

hand, and squeezed it harder than he had ever squeezed her's in his life, and said, "Now, I will not be put off with a laugh; but if you value my wishes in the least, you will not refuse me."

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Maria was "all soul!"—not the "all soul" of the over-amiable Miss Wilhelmina, whose equally

silly friend calls her so because she is made up of sighs and sentiment of a sickly growth—but I mean, Maria's soul had such power over her, that it would sometimes take her up, and run away with her; and, when it put her down again, she often looked very much ashamed of what it had made her do. For instance, she had now seized Montfort's hand and wrung it, without knowing what she was exactly about, until an astonished look from him made her soul—not "put her down again," but "throw her off," in some confusion.

Seeing this favourable opportunity, Montfort began to spread a few honied words over the bitterness of a refusal; but this recalled Maria to herself, and when he said "Dear Maria! you know I would do any thing to ——"

She stopped him by saying, "I must not have kind words from you, instead of a kind act. I will not listen to them," continued she, putting her hands to her ears, "for you will think them sufficient to give me."

"Maria! do I treat my friends so hollowly?" said Montfort.

"Did *I* say so?" replied Maria; and tears—could he be mistaken?—tears gathered in her eyes. No! There was no mistake! they glistened in the moonlight, and then rolled down her cheek.

Although Maria's tears were caused by a momentary impulse, and were blamed by herself, never were those of a crocodile better timed or more effective.

"Have I been the cause of this?" said Montfort.

"No! my own folly has! But whatever I said that was wrong, proceeded from anxiety. However, I must speak no more on the subject!"

"Maria, I will do any thing rather than ——"

"Then," said she, starting at his words, and quite forgetting her late promise to speak no more on the subject, "do as I ask you."

"I will if ——"

"Now, what 'if' can there be?"

"If it is quite safe—and I see that it is so!"

"Now you are good, indeed!" replied Maria, "but you reward me for being the reverse." *

Still Montfort seemed scarcely reconciled to the promise he had made, and asked one of those questions which we all ask now and then, although we perfectly well know what the answer must be: "Do you not think you shall soon want to sleep yourself, Maria?"

"Come!" replied she, with a manner there was no resisting, "you shall not do a good act with a bad grace. I am sure I could not go to sleep for some hours, even if I were to try; and look round and say if it is possible that, with this light, any thing can approach without being seen —that is, unless I neglect my watch, and go to sleep —which you may be afraid of."

Montfort smiled, but the security of the situa-

* Brandy and gin are called "strong waters:" but I know of no waters so strong, although they don't pay the excise-duty, as Woman's tears. And I am sure my hero is of my opinion, for when he had fully determined to say "No," only a few drops had power enough to turn that word into "Yes."

tion, and the brightness of the light, were as little to be disputed as Maria's tears; and in a few minutes he was sound asleep on the heap of moss which Maria had collected during his absence.

"Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
But fear the sword like me, he 'll scarcely look on 't."

Maria thought with Imogen a short time since, but "misery had made her acquainted with strange" ideas, and this surely was one of them,—that as soon as Montfort slept, she softly took one of the pistols which he had laid beside him, and kept it in her hand.

She leant against the huge and moss-grown tree, at the foot of which Montfort lay, whose giant arms seemed made to fling back the thunders of Heaven; nor did her bending and graceful softness contrast more strongly with the forms around her, than with her seeming purpose.

She leant, watching her lover's sleep as intently as the moon seemed watching her—and it were hard to tell which were the loveliest watcher; but there ended the likeness, for the moon went

peaceful and unobscured along her heavenly way, whilst the shadows that passed over Maria's young brow told that her mind was not untroubled.

She almost felt that she had undertaken too much; and, but that her object was so great, she would have felt so. The solitude of her situation, the utter solitude—for such might it be called, when she had no living thing in sight save one, who lay before her the image of death—had such effect upon her at length, that it made her draw close to Montfort for protection, although he was asleep—she longed to touch him, to gain confidence. Even the beauty of the objects around her, notwithstanding that it was beauty, was of so stupendous a sort that she felt it to be oppressive. The very silence itself was startling. To hear Montfort breathe now and then a little harder than usual, seemed quite a support to her. She longed for the consolation of Lion's company, but this even was denied her; for fearing he might awaken Montfort, she had made him stay at a little distance in charge of their things. Maria well knew the weakness of

her fears, but had not the power to drive them away; by slow degrees, however, she became accustomed to her situation, and then, when at length her "perturbed spirit" did "rest," she could feel.

And what were her feelings in that lone hour? There lay before her the being to whom she owed her deliverance from captivity and death, and to whom she longed to owe much more, if that were possible; it was so sweet to owe him every thing. There lay—with no one to watch him, and take care of him, but herself—he who had supported and upheld her in so many perils and heart-failings—he to whom her slightest wish was a law which he seemed not to have the power of breaking; whose generous and tender care of her was only equalled by his daring in her service; the very being, too—a union of strength and softness, on which the love of woman most naturally reposes—who under the most ordinary circumtances would have caught her young affections, if she had had the opportunity of knowing him;—there he lay at her feet, as peaceful, as helpless,

and as calling for her care, as a sleeping infant—so helpless, that she, even, was his protector: she bent over him and cried like a child, as many a mother weeps over her slumbering boy, merely because she loves him.

That happiness into which the imagination most enters—the most ideal, may give the highest delight; but there are moments, when the gush of our feelings seems to overwhelm our ideas, which are hardly to be exchanged for any thing superior. Maria, as she hung over her sleeping lover, had no thoughts—she could not have told why she was thus affected—it was a material delight; but still she could not conceive any thing less earthly.

Whilst Maria was thus looking, in spite of her disguise, all that was feminine and soft, she was startled by a rustling in the bushes close to them. She, who an hour before had nearly sunk under ideal fears, now did not tremble, but stepped between her charge and danger; which awoke Montfort, who, springing up, frightened away a night-bird that had made the noise.

They were instantly aware that there was nothing to fear near them, and Montfort now felt Maria tremble violently as he supported her. When a few moments had passed, he missed one of his pistols, and then discovered it in Maria's hand, who, being rather ashamed, had tried to hide it.

"How is this, Maria?" said he, doubtingly, as he took it from her.

Maria was very much tempted to account for it by some little invention manufactured on the spot; in fact, she never felt more inclined to tell a story in her life. Had she been in a house, I have not a doubt she would have done so; but it was quite a different matter where all the stars were looking at her, and each, as she could almost fancy, holding up its finger and saying, "Ah! I see you, Miss!" From stars to their Maker the thought is so direct, that she was afraid to do wrong before them. She had, therefore, only that last resource left, of hanging down her head.

If it be thought I have taken too great a license in giving fingers to stars, I must plead the precedent of the gentleman who gave breeches-pockets to crocodiles.

But Montfort was not altogether free from blame in this transaction; for, when he took the pistol out of Maria's hand, he kept his eyes fixed upon her in a most annoying and shameful manner for some time, and then said, in a tone meant to be very impressive, "Man's ill-nature has made him find out all the weakness of woman's character; but I believe he is too stupid ever to find out its strength."

The only impression, however, that it had on Maria, was to make her think, "You have no business to be always abusing men! Besides, man has *not* discovered all woman's weakness; for you have not discovered all mine, though how that should be I cannot make out!"

Notwithstanding that Maria still hung down her head, Montfort at length discovered she had again been crying, and asked her the reason, but

found it as difficult to get an answer on this subject as on the former. "I was very wrong in going to sleep," said he; "I might have known the loneliness of your situation would have had this effect on your spirits."

"Oh, that was not the cause, I assure you!"

"Then, what was the cause? When I went to sleep, you were in good spirits; but I awake, and find you have been crying." But still, receiving no answer, he concluded with, "I can only blame myself for it."

"Do not blame yourself! You have no cause to do so;—nor would you blame me if you knew the reason."

Seeing Maria was really distressed, Montfort not only pursued the subject no further, but he strove to divert her mind from it. "Well, dear Maria, whether I was right or wrong, your kindness has had its effect; for I now feel perfectly refreshed and recovered from my fatigue, and the sooner you go to sleep, the better."

Maria was too glad to escape, to wait for a

second bidding, but instantly lay down—provoked only at one thing, that Montfort should thus have seen her crying twice within a few hours: she knew he thought that over-easily excited feelings were seldom deep.—"And will he think that my feelings are not deep? I cannot believe it!" But, nevertheless, she resolved to laugh enough on the morrow, to make up for it.

Maria had not put her new shoes under her pillow, (although full as proud of them as ever was child, because it had cost her lover so much to get them for her,) and Montfort, when she was asleep, with a smooth stone, pressed down all the rough stitches and little lumps he could discover. These a peasant girl would never have felt; but he feared they might hurt Maria's feet. Whilst he was about this job, it is to be supposed he thought of the said feet; for he stuck one of the shoes on three of his fingers (he pretended not to be able to get the fourth into it), held it off at arm's-length, put his head a little on one side as he eyed it, smiled, and said, "What a thing it is!"

CHAPTER III.

"Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile."

MILTON.

WHEN at the village, Montfort had ventured to make some inquiries about their route, and had learnt that they must inevitably cross a difficult and not unfrequently (from the quantities of snow often found there, even in summer,) dangerous pass, in order to get to the point they wished. There was no possibility of what soldiers call "turning" this pass, as it was the most accessible part of a far-stretching ridge, which intersected their course at nearly a right angle. They had to go up on one side by a path so steep and inconvenient as almost

to defy a mule, then traverse a considerable distance on the top, and down on the other by a way still worse. The snow added to the difficulties, and constituted the danger of the attempt, as the time of the year was no security to them that enough, to efface all marks of the path, might not already have fallen, or fall whilst they were endeavouring to pass; in which case they would be liable to mistake the turn down it into the low country, and might get bewildered amongst the ever-frozen peaks. Even without snow, they would be liable to this error, for the road was so insignificant and little marked, that a mere goat-track, leading perhaps to a hollow where a scanty herbage might be found at midsummer, could well be taken for it. In such a case, it was possible for them, before they discovered their mistake, to get too far to be able to clear the snows before dark; and for Maria to live through a night amidst them, appeared to Montfort an utter impossibility.

The next morning, after travelling for about two hours, they found themselves at the foot of the

ascent; and in two hours more, they were high up amongst the snowy peaks, where, like many other mortals, they paid bitterly for their exalted station.

A drizzling sleet soon came on—a kind of wet cold, much harder to bear than dry cold, however cut-throat that may be, because the latter shrinks up the skin, and gives it something of the resistance of parchment, whilst the other opens the pores, as if on purpose to let the raw air take more effect. Maria was quite provoked that she could not prevent her teeth from chattering, although she tried with all her might, as she saw that her suffering from the cold distressed Montfort so much, for a real lover magnifies into torments the slightest ache of his mistress's little finger. Moreover, she would not have wished her nose to look so very blue, as she thought it must, if she could have helped it. However, I am not quite convinced that the chattering of her teeth proceeded from cold alone, for perhaps her tongue had given them a bad habit.

Montfort loaded her with the cloak, in hopes

the exertion of carrying it, added to its warmth, might serve to keep some heat in her; but, in spite of all his care, Maria soon became a pitiable-looking object: the half-snow, half-water, which splashed up about her heels at every step, had frozen hard round the bottoms of her trowsers, and made moving in them like walking in armour: the sleet, too, stuck in what hair Montfort's shears had left, and caused it to hang down in straps about her face; nor were her almost frozen fingers of sufficient use to enable her to squeeze the water out of her locks, but she was obliged to trust to Montfort's awkward ones to perform that office for her.

That Maria would not make a useless and silly fuss about her situation, Montfort was aware; but well as he knew her, her patient and cheerful endurance quite surprised him. She tried to talk the same as ever, and quite laughed at him for thinking a little cold such a very great hardship. Nevertheless, he could almost have cried at what the dear girl endured;

for the way in which she bore her sufferings had quite the contrary effect to what it was intended to have—of making him think less of them.

In a short time Montfort had a much more serious cause of alarm, for the sleet turned to dense heavy snow, just at the moment, too, that Maria felt so exhausted as to be obliged to ask to rest for a while. He dreaded, if allowed to do so, she might never be able to move again; and therefore, putting his arm round her waist, and with a cold hand in each of his, they walked on as well as they were able.

Notwithstanding all his exertions, Maria was, at last, obliged to sit down under shelter of a snow-drift. Montfort took off his jacket to wrap round her feet, where he saw she was suffering most.

"I will not permit that!" said Maria, in a tone that would have been firm, but for her provoking teeth. But still he continued wrapping them up. Cold as her feet were, she found it more easy to use them than her tongue, so, giving

a great kick, she got them out of his hands, and, in the exertion, pushed Montfort down in the snow.

It is not supposed that the latter part of this manœuvre proceeded from any particular vice in the young lady, although she did enjoy it enough to laugh; but, as it showed her determination to resist manfully, Montfort thought he had better come to terms with her, and therefore said, "Well, then, Maria, you shall put them in my lap!"

"Put on your jacket immediately, and I will do any thing."

This being done, he sat down; and when the tremblers were consigned to his care, he hugged them so tight that it had a wonderful effect upon Maria; for it not only warmed her feet, but brought the blood back into her face, and she had soon rested long enough to proceed.

Maria's laugh had, ere this, however, done that which it never did before—made Montfort wretched!—for it showed she was totally unconscious of

there being any danger in their situation, and he was now decidedly of opinion that such was the case. His heart sunk within him when he thought that she whom it loved so well—who looked upon her present sufferings as, at worst, but a temporary evil—might yet, at their close, be stretched out before him, a lifeless thing: he knew, too, that it was her unbounded confidence in his protection which made her insensible to her peril, against which that protection was of no avail; and it by no means lessened his misery to think she was thus deceived, although involuntarily on his part.

In places where the snow had drifted, it was now so deep, that they sunk in it nearly up to their knees, which rendered walking as tedious as it was tiresome at a time when delay might be attended with the most fatal consequences; but, on the other hand, from the same cause, they often passed a space comparatively bare. Step by step they went on, steering, as well as they could, between the peaks where they knew the only road

lay that was passable at any time, but without their now being able to perceive the slightest trace of it.

After toiling on, seemingly interminably, they succeeded in passing between two peaks, from whence they hoped to find the land slope down towards the vallies; but, to their utter dismay, they were presented with a view of heights on heights, rising behind each other in hopeless succession.

All who have toiled much amidst such mountains know what a daunting and disappointing sight is this formidable array, even when there is no snow or danger in the way, but only that the—perhaps tired and hungry—traveller's rest and food lie behind the many-headed barrier: hydra heads they really seem, for, as soon as one is overcome, another appears to rise up on your path in its place. What, then, must it be when the danger is imminent, and, to complete the misery, a helpless female is depending on one's care? Eternal whiteness lay before them, spread out, as if without limit: it chilled the very soul to look upon it. It

is scarcely exaggeration to say, the fancy even dared not pierce it, for fear of being, like a fallen spirit in the place of punishment, "infixed, and frozen round."

After one glance at this fit winding-sheet for a dead nation, Montfort became convinced they had mistaken their way; but, on attempting to retrace it by the guidance of their own foot-tracks, he found them already perfectly obliterated; nor were they certain, from the similarity of the points about them all clothed in the same unvarying garment, by what opening they had entered the hollow they were now in. There was only one thing in their favour—they had still many hours of daylight before them.

Montfort manned himself by casting one look upon the object whom it was his duty to support, who now seemed to suffer less pain from the cold, owing to her becoming alive to the danger of their situation; and hardly had he gained this accession of courage when he had to use it; for a violent gust of wind caught up the snow from

the ground into the air, whirling it round with such force, that, when once in its eddy, it was as much as they could do to keep their feet, by holding as tight as possible by each other. Montfort was now almost in despair on Maria's account; but her own calmness did not forsake her, and she said, "Do you not think Lion would find out the track we came by?"

"Yes, that I am sure he would," replied he; "so keep up your spirits, as we can always return if we wish it; but as we must surmount this difficulty some time or other, I will make another effort before we give it up at present."

The instant the gust of wind had spent itself, they moved about a hundred yards, to get clear of the deep snow it had heaped around them; and there, to their great surprise, they found its force could not have extended, violent as it was with them, for the surface was still perfectly smooth and undisturbed. Montfort looked steadily on every side for a moment, to see what had better be attempted next. Whilst so doing, Maria

discovered, and pointed out, the track of some animal in the snow: what it was, they could not tell; but it was evident that something had lived and moved in that solitude before: and this incident, slight as it may appear to those whose minds are not similarly excited, gave them hope and confidence—it had the effect of the little land bird appearing to the shipwrecked in the deep.

Montfort now hastily trod down the snow hard in a small circle, told Maria to keep constantly moving in it as she valued her life, and then, accompanied by Lion, rushed forward, seemingly with supernatural strength, first to one opening and then to another, to see if either of them might offer any hope: but where the land descended, it was in impassable precipices; and where the reverse, the same difficulties were before them as at the point they had just given up. An attempt, then, to retrace their steps back by Lion's assistance was their only chance; but in this Montfort by no means felt the confidence he

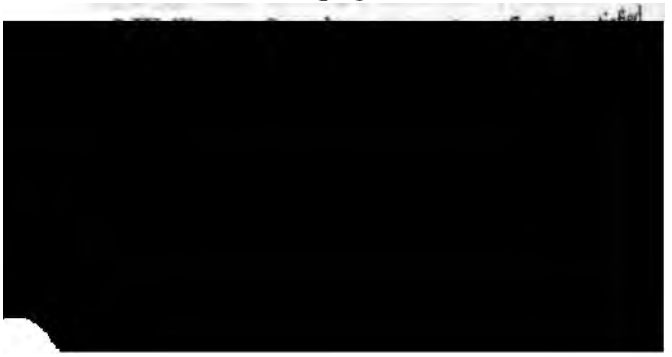
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indeed, a slight consultation and debate on this subject; but Maria was strenuously in favour of giving themselves up entirely to the dog's guidance, and Montfort could not object when he well knew they had nothing else to trust to.

Nevertheless, they had not gone very far before their new faith was nearly overcome, for the dog led them to an opening between two rocks, which both felt sure they had not passed before, the objects in themselves being so remarkable as to convince them they could not be mistaken; and an error here was of the utmost consequence, as, from the nature of the ground, there must, at this point, be a very decided alteration in their course. Even Maria, herself, with all her confidence exclaimed, "I am quite sure we never passed this spot!" so, also, thought Montfort, although he did not say so: but Lion continued obstinately on the same track, and when Montfort insisted on his quitting it, and beating round for a new direction, he did so, but returned to precisely the same point as before. It was now Montfort's

animal. This circumstance did happen, and might happen in the best of us: yet we give ourselves airs! Lear should have advised "pride" to "take physic" as well as "pomp."

Such reflections as these, though I grant them shallow and simple, are very wholesome, and if uttered in our heads and in our hearts would make both better, as they serve to correct overweening ideas of ourselves. But still, why need it excite wonder that so much should have depended on the instinct of one animal? for does it not often happen that the prosperity of a whole people rests upon a single life, whether of monarch, warrior, or statesman,—a tenure just as frail? Nay, to bring the matter home to ourselves, who can feel certain he is speaking the truth if he avers that the existence of England, as an independent nation, did not hang upon the life of Arthur Duke

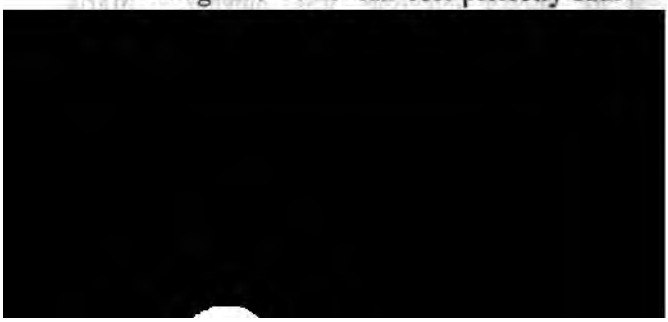


on, as the snow had drifted in such heaps over the road by which they came, that even when the dog showed where it lay, they could not in some places pursue it, for fear of being buried. The consequence was, when they were forced to leave the right track, Lion followed them, and sometimes had great difficulty in recovering it again, they being obliged to wait patiently until he succeeded in doing so.

It was an extraordinary situation to be placed in, and must have caused strange feelings, that the two beings made "in the image of their Maker" should be obliged to wait, utterly helpless themselves, until the poor despised brute should decide their fate—should, as it were, pronounce whether they were to live or to die. Years of life, joy or woe—a host of feelings—the happiness of all who loved them—long races of descendants—nay, considering who was one of those whose fates trembled on such a balance, perhaps a nation's destinies—all might hang upon the sagacity of an

animal. This circumstance did happen, and might happen to the best of us; yet we give ourselves airs! Lear should have advised "pride" to "take physic" as well as "pomp."

Such reflections as these, though I grant them shallow and simple, are very wholesome, and if oftener in our heads and in our hearts would make both better, as they serve to correct overweening ideas of ourselves. But still, why need it excite wonder that so much should have depended on the instinct of one animal? for does it not often happen that the prosperity of a whole people rests upon a single life, whether of monarch, warrior, or statesman,—a tenure just as frail? Nay, to bring the matter home to ourselves, who can feel certain he is speaking the truth if he avers that the existence of England, as an independent nation, did not hang upon the life of Arthur Duke of Wellington?—who can rest perfectly satisfied



CHAPTER IV.

"Where forms and falls
The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits."

BYRON.

SHORTLY after our wanderers became certain they were on the right track, they heard a noise on the side of a hill which they had just passed near, of so unusual a kind, that it caused them to stop and look about. At first they could not see any thing extraordinary, but soon perceived that the whole of its snowy covering was moving. Maria seemed, by her look, at first to vote for running away; but when Montfort quickly assured her it could not possibly, from the direction it

was taking, touch them, she required no further encouragement to stand her ground.

And now, it having stopped snowing, (which I have omitted to say it had all along done at intervals,) they had an excellent opportunity of seeing how an avalanche is made—that is, one sort of avalanche; for it is clear the process must vary according to the situation: where the declivity is so great as nearly to approach a perpendicular, it falls off at once; but where the slope is much less, it takes its time, and is perhaps the more extraordinary sight, because the more markable. Were I to proceed *secundùm artem*, and say, "First take your snow and lay it on the side of a hill, &c.," this "receipt for an avalanche" would perhaps give as good an idea of the thing as I am capable of, but it might not be thought sufficiently heroic: I must therefore set about it in a different way.

The mass began to move near the top, but not regularly; for, here and there, some parts found impediments of sufficient strength to arrest their progress: when those behind, still pressing on,

would accumulate into a high heap, and then roll and tumble over like a huge white wave. At first there were so many of these detached struggles going on, that it appeared doubtful to which side victory would incline: one almost felt tempted to back rocks and hillocks against snow; but, by degrees, the resistance relaxed, and the power of the attacking force increased; some of the heroes who stood for the adverse part were beaten down, and from others, whose valour had made them respected, the current of the fight had rolled away.

As all opposition ceased, the mass began (to use a sailor's phrase) to "gather way" generally; at first rather slowly, but it soon bore onward with such velocity and giant force, that one then wondered how its power could ever have been resisted, even in its birth. On it came with a "rushing mighty wind" of icy coldness, throwing up clouds of loose snow around it, like the spray of some tremendous cataract. Although perfectly safe from its power, both Maria and Montfort looked pale as it swept

over the track they had passed a few minutes before, totally unconscious that such a terrific foe so soon should cross their path. Before they had time for even this thought to pass through their minds, the mass had reached a gap near the foot of the slope it came from: it paused, as if the impetus was hardly enough to carry it through: another moment of suspense; it rolled once over, then rushed away, and was lost to their sight; but they heard it for some time crashing the pine-forest in its irresistible course down to the vallies.

The space during which this noise continued made Montfort reflect, that the distance the avalanche must have passed through trees could not but be very great; that where trees grew thick, it was always possible to walk; and that such a forerunner must have effectually cleared all snow from its course, and at least have left a hard road, although perhaps not a good one. The direction he believed to be that of their true course, for he was now convinced they had got greatly out of

their way in passing on to the point from which they had turned back.

As soon as this thought struck him, he was so anxious to know if the track was a regular slope, without being intersected by impassable precipices, and if it appeared to reach the low lands in the direction they wanted to go, that he ran off to see, in a great hurry, having first explained himself to Maria in such a confused manner, that she was not quite sure he was not trying to catch the avalanche. However, he soon returned, and took her over to the brow of the hill, where they sat down for a short time to consult, after having first cast a wary eye round to see that no more such visiters were likely to come tumbling on their heads.

They could distinctly trace the course the body of snow had taken: it was as clearly marked out by the crushed trees, as that of a rolling stone would be through a field of high corn: it looked a broad, fair, and easy road; and although they by no means expected to find it so, they deter-

[redacted] to attempt it: it evidently reached far below the region of snow, quite in the direction they wished, and apparently into a sufficiently easy country. Besides, any difficulty they could meet with, however tedious, would certainly not, if at all surmountable, be near so dangerous, as having to dare the snows once more, should they now turn back. Montfort also thought that they must be able to get clear of the snowy region before being obliged to stop for the night: and, wherever that might happen, they would at least be sure of plenty of fire-wood and some shelter; nor was he quite

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went for a considerable distance many feet above the earth, scrambling and sliding along on the prostrate trees; the thick branches of which, however, had fortunately been crushed so flat and close together, that they did not very often slip between them.

In this manœuvre the bipeds had greatly the advantage of their four-footed companion, although he had been relieved from what he had before been carrying ere they commenced it: there was only one thing in favour of the latter, that when he did slip through, he could generally run along between the branches at the bottom for a few yards, before he was forced to emerge again; but this he seemed by no means to consider as an equivalent for the mortification of disappearing so often as he did.

Montfort was frequently obliged to scold Maria for wasting her time in stopping to comfort and coax along her favourite, until she at last got into a pet, and began to scold again, precisely at the moment too, that it had struck him he had said

more to her than he should have done: he had therefore, nothing to do but to be penitent, and then he found how hard it really was to please her; for when he told her she was wrong in stopping, she maintained that she was right but the moment he allowed that she was right, she declared that she was wrong. Be this as it may, it is very certain that people should neither quarrel nor be reconciled on the top of a tree; for Montfort had just said, deprecatingly "Well, but Maria! whose sake do I scold for yours, or my own?" when the young lady, who never could have her feelings appealed to without being sensible of, and giving way to, an impulse suddenly stretched out her hand, rather to ask for than to offer reconciliation, and as suddenly disappeared from Montfort's view, even before he could catch the extended hand, which it may be supposed he was not slow to attempt; nor had he time to ask if she were hurt, before he found his own feet on the ground, and the branches closed over his head.

He had no need to repeat the question he had nearly completed by the time he got to the ground, as a most convincing laugh banished all his alarm, and perhaps gave him the idea that it would be the best way to put Maria's to flight if she felt any on his account; so he repaid it in kind, and with interest.

"Well!" said Maria, as soon as she had finished her laugh, "when you are beginning to scold again, I hope you will recollect that your last lecture nearly broke my neck."

"That is more than it will ever do to your heart," replied Montfort, "for I don't believe you mind it in the least. But," he continued, "are you likely to get out of your cage? for I don't see any chance of my doing so from mine!"

"Then, I shall be the better off of the two," said Maria, as Li forced his way through the branches to her, "for I shall have company."

But Montfort soon recollected, that although it might be amusing to stay there laughing, it was not the way to get Maria as far from the cold as

possible before nightfall; so, following Lion's example, he squeezed between the branches, and soon made his appearance in Maria's den, from which they easily effected their escape, now they seriously set about it.

Having ascertained that they had all their things safe, they again set forward; and, by the time it was dusk, had reached, if not so far as they hoped, yet quite far enough from the cold region to give them little fear on that head, especially considering the shelter it was so easy to procure.

Poor Maria had found this latter part of their day's journey sadly fatiguing, nor could Montfort possibly, from the nature of it, render her much assistance. As soon as he had decided that, on her account, they ought to stop, he sought out for as snug a cage as they had before each got into against their inclination; nor was he long in finding such, but took care to choose one from which they could still more easily escape, in case the fire he intended to make should become rather

larger than he bargained for, and catch their sheltering branches. He hastily collected a bed of the leaves (if leaves they may be called) of the fir; that is, he got a heap of the ends of the youngest branches, upon which Maria threw herself with undisguised satisfaction; nor was it less enjoyed by Li, who lay down on it also, without the least ceremony, and indeed served Maria for a pillow until Montfort could get her another. He then lit a good fire, which was easily done, the turpentine in the pine-wood making it blaze like a candle; broke off a few straggling branches, and, by weaving others roughly together, formed a most comfortable-looking and commodious gipsy-bower; so much so, that Maria, as she lay stretched out at her ease, and cast her eyes around her, the fire blazing merrily, could not help saying, "Well, what a comfortable change this is, from winds and clouds of snow to our nice little bower! why, it is quite the place children would love to play in!"

To Montfort, not only was every thing full as

comfortable as to Maria, but her excessive fatigue was quite delightful, as, in addition to giving him the opportunity of doing for her whatever would have occasioned her the trouble of moving, it authorised him to sit close beside her bed at their evening meal, and to feed the exhausted girl as one feeds a babe.

"Come, Maria!" said he; "you must let me cut up your meat for you! I wish we had a fork or spoon; as then I might save you even the trouble of putting it into your mouth."

"Oh! I think I can manage that," replied she; "but much more I could not do."

"I hope you are not too much tired to sleep."

"No! I do not think I am, for I am not too tired to eat, although not near so hungry as in general."

"Now let me see if I cannot feed you with this," said Montfort, showing a sharp stick, which he had been pointing with his knife.

"But I must at all events sit up to swallow, and then I may as well feed myself."

"Not at all, Maria! it is much more classical to eat lying down; so it is said the Romans did."

"But not being a Roman, and therefore not understanding their fashion, I don't want to choke myself for the sake of being classical."

But Montfort still persisting, Maria said, "No, I must not allow you to make such a babe of me!"

"Why not, Maria? you are so tired as to be nearly as helpless as a babe, and why should I not make a babe of you? Come!" continued he, coaxingly, "you know babes are always taken the greatest care of!" and he held up the most tempting-looking bit of cold meat he could find, on his primitive fork, close to her nose.

Maria's pretty mouth first relaxed into a smile, then slowly opened, and Montfort's wish was accomplished; but he did not know whether he owed his success to his own oratory, or to the smell of the meat.

"And how does it happen," said Maria, when

her supper was finished, "that I am not quizzed about being so tired?"

"You are looking so utterly helpless, that I cannot have the heart to attack you in any way to-night—not even to laugh at you. I must not do so until you are able to defend yourself as well as you did to-day on the top of the tree."

"Not with a similar result, however, I hope," said Maria, giving a sleepy laugh; "or I had much better be attacked now, as I have not far to fall. It must be allowed, if we had both broken our necks, that our arguments would have been attended with more decisive effects than ever were arguments before."

Montfort laughed too as he thought of their sudden disappearance, but said, "Are we not talking too much, Maria? it will only fatigue you more! Don't you think you had better try to go to sleep at once?"

"No! I am a little feverish, I believe, from fatigue; and if I try to settle myself regularly to repose, I do not think I shall succeed; but if

you continue to talk to me, I am sure I shall soon go to sleep."

"Upon my word, you are very flattering!"

"Ah!" said Maria, with her eyes quite shut, and her mouth only half open, as she spoke, "I don't believe I exactly said what I meant, for I know I meant something very civil in—" and almost before she could say "deed," she was in a slight doze; which was much more gratifying to Montfort than the end of her apology would have been.

Oh! once more would I pray for that happy facility of forgetting time, which lovers have! Montfort watched Maria's face by the bright flame of their pine fire; and as hour after hour glided by, he saw that her sleep became less and less disturbed, until, at length, she lay in as much peace as security and comfort. And little was he then, as he gazed upon her, likely to forget what they had that day gone through—to forget what were his feelings a few short hours ago, and to contrast them gratefully with what they now were;—and

as little likely was he to be ashamed to return thanks for them, for he too, "in regard to these subjects, had no sense of shame, and had ranged himself in the class of the weak and superstitious." Yes, he felt it a gratifying thing to go out from looking even on the face of her he loved, to look upon God—to see Him in his glorious works on high, and to bless His Holy Name, and thank Him.

When the usual time to awaken Maria was come, Montfort thought of the excessive fatigue she had undergone, and had not the heart to do it: he therefore let her sleep on two or three hours longer, and then she awoke of her own accord. As soon as her eyes were open, she perceived that it was broad day, and started up suddenly from her bed. Whether or no Montfort recollected the storm that had once assailed him for merely asking her to do what he had now let her do without asking, I know not; but before she had power to say a word, he cried out, "Stop, Maria! I will sleep as long as ever you please, to make up for

it; and I only let you do so beyond your usual hour, because you were so very much tired, and because I had determined on this before—indeed I won't get up until you tell me to do so, Maria!" And, as he uttered this last part of his speech, he looked in a real fright; which made Maria laugh, in spite of her having intended to be in a very great rage. However, she tried to look in a fury as well as she could, and said, "Lie down instantly then, and don't let me hear one word from you until I tell you to get up."

Like a dog, was Montfort ordered to lie down, (as he afterwards declared,) and, like a dog, down he lay; Lion himself could not have done so more submissively: and this ready obedience, I suppose, softened Maria's heart, for when she saw that his heels were higher than his head, she bade him move the latter, and shook his pillow up for him, and placed it properly, saying, "As I would not give you time to make your own bed, I must not be so cruel as to keep you in misery."

Now, by this manœuvre of Maria's, Montfort,

[redacted]

[redacted] calculations he could [redacted] on the subject for [redacted] was not able to decide [redacted] or not: for, if his pillow [redacted] her own dear hands, that [redacted] her dear, dear [redacted] it." Taking the matter in this [redacted] he was a discarded lover: but [redacted] on the [redacted] pillow was an accidental circumstance, and not [redacted] or any regard to his happiness, however much it might add to it: whereas the [redacted] was of course an intentional kindness



to himself, "I wish I could tell whether to blame or praise the girl!"—but he couldn't, and was forced to go to sleep, leaving it what lawyers call a moot-case.

Montfort kept Maria's command about not speaking as well as he could; but when he awoke late in the day, and saw her holding up a great bunch of fir, and with it threatening her own Li,—who, it seems, was getting impatient for his breakfast, and making a noise, which she feared might awake Montfort,—he could not help saying, loud enough to be heard, "If she is treating Li, what am I to expect!"—"Why," answered Maria, "you are to expect to get up and have your breakfast as soon as you like, for it is now twelve o'clock!"

Montfort was not slow to avail himself of this permission. He found Maria more recovered from the excessive fatigue of the previous day than he had ventured to hope for, and therefore urged the speedy continuance of their journey, telling her, as an inducement, that if she could manage

to get to the low country before night, he would make her as pretty a bower as that they were now to leave. The young lady promised to exert herself to obtain such a reward; but was not called on to fulfil her promise, for without exertion she accomplished the undertaking,—as, to their great relief, (especially to Li's) they, very shortly after quitting their bivouac, came to a part of the avalanche's track where the trees were sufficiently scattered to admit of their walking between them. Craggy rocks and dizzy steeps had to be occasionally passed, it is true; but by this time Maria's foot had become so sure, and her head so steady, that she provokingly seldom required assistance. Montfort thought it too steady a great deal in this respect, although he by no means conceived he had any reason to complain of its being over-much so in others. They could have reached the low country some time before nightfall, but stopped short of it for the sake of security, shelter, and that Montfort might fulfil the promise he had made; which, when the bright

flame again threw a flickering light upon their sylvan screen, Maria told him he had fully done.

And now, having left the wanderers in comfort and security, I will take the liberty of passing over a few days of that journey, which was one long interchange of acts of love slenderly veiled, and therefore one long dream of happiness to them—but happiness akin to what the bright and beautiful visions of delirium give us: we feel them to be lovely, but we know them to be false and fleeting.

CHAPTER V.

These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies I have heard!
Our courtiers say, all's savage but at court:
Experience, O, thou disprov'st report!"

SHAKSPEARE.

By the seventh day after the adventure of crossing the pass, they had travelled nearly a hundred miles more; and on the evening of it they lit a fire in a little grassy nook surrounded by rocks high up amongst the mountains.

Maria was very whimsical about receiving Montfort's assistance in some things: cooking their dinner (whenever they had any to cook) was one of them. At one time she would set him to work, and be delighted to have his help; whilst at another

she would not let him do a single thing. The latter was, when the delightful idea took possession of her, that it was her place to get his dinner for him; but this Montfort, in his ignorance, called her "independent fit." To-day,—principally, I believe, to make him understand how clever she was, and what a notable cottager's wife she would have made had such been her lot,—she decided on broiling some of their cold meat for dinner; the great difficulty of which undertaking consisted in making a fire of the green brushwood, her companion's assistance on the occasion being utterly forbidden.

The smoke appeared to take part with Montfort, who attempted to rebel against Maria's decision; for when she stooped to blow the fire, making a pair of bellows of the two prettiest lips that ever were seen, out came a puff of it in her face, so opportunely, that it seemed to have been watching until it caught her near enough to do so with effect; which caused her to squeeze up her eyelids, and shrink back, as a child does from a too

bright light, making a face that even Montfort pronounced to be ugly—adding, at the same time, that "she deserved to be made ugly, or any thing else that was bad, for being so conceited as to refuse his assistance."

"I wish," said Maria, as soon as she could speak for coughing, "that you would find some other amusement than that of sitting there laughing at, and abusing me."

"Maria, you may, if you please!" replied Montfort.

"May do what, if I please?"

"Why, beat me!" said he, "for if you don't look as though you longed to do so now, you did a minute ago."

"Well, you deserved it!" returned Maria; "for if the smoke did not exactly puff in my face, in compliance with your wishes, you were quite delighted when it did do so. But did I look very cross?"

"Indeed you did! I should not like to have been at your mercy at the moment."

"Ah!" thought Maria, as she turned, smiling, to her work again, "you would have had little to fear, unless a kiss would have frightened you."

Montfort did soon find another employment besides laughing at Maria. He amused himself by twisting some wild flowering creepers into a coronet, to crown her with when her labours were over; but only in case she succeeded in lighting the fire, and broiling their dinner.

Maria did succeed; and, after their meal was over, demanded her crown; which Montfort had put upon a rock, and appeared to have forgotten.

"What!" said she, "is this the way you reward my exertions? Am I to toil without payment, although it was promised to me?"

When Montfort put the crown upon her head, she looked so pretty, that this trifling produced a somewhat serious result. "You make a very rural-looking village queen, Maria!" said he.

Knowing that "rural-looking" meant "beautiful," Maria cast down her eyes—the suddenness of which had such an effect on Montfort, that it

seemed to surprise him into adding, "Would to God you had never been any thing else!"

This speech would bear a double meaning, either that he wished it on his own account, or because it would have saved her so much misery. But, the moment he had made it, it seemed to his affrighted mind as if it could only possibly be taken in one sense; and a single look at Maria convinced him as to her interpretation of it.

She was thoughtful for a minute, and then said, "Would to God I might never be again!" She paused a second time, but at length added, "At all events, I never can be any thing else to you!" And here came in that most dangerous sort of sigh—a sigh that is evidently attempted to be strangled in its birth, but that escapes in spite of the attempt.

I have made Montfort out to be a saint on many occasions; nevertheless, he was only half a saint after all. Martyrdom he could have borne very well for a private gentleman, but temptation was quite out of his line; and now he was again

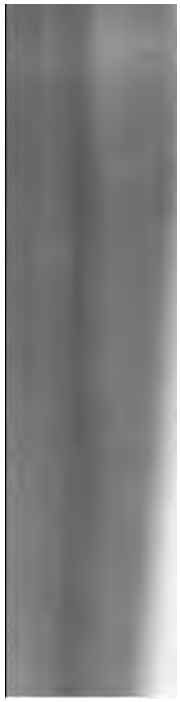
sore tempted. The air was balmy—the hour, evening; the flowers never smelt so sweet, nor looked so bright before; and "herself, the fairest flower," hung down her head and blushed, as a young rose does when it seems almost to ask you to gather it and lay it on your bosom.

Montfort would have been lost, but for one thing. In such cases most heroic writers—to which title, I must confess, I do humbly aspire—would have made their hero call reason to his aid, or fortitude, or any thing else with a fine name, which "never comes when you do call for it;" or, in less poetic phrase, "the more you call, the more it won't come." It is all nonsense! —nothing like a "Hem!" When Montfort felt the "Hysterico Passio" getting quite unbearable, when he felt it almost impossible to help showing her in its true colour that ball of fire, his heart—to help making use of some such words as, "Maria! you may be a queen again, and I may be your meanest subject, but can that prevent my loving you as none else ever can love you?" he

[redacted] "Hem!" and it saved him—saved him, also, [redacted] speech. There is nothing like it on [redacted]: and that I have proved before [redacted]. To be sure, he did turn his eyes away [redacted] flower-crowned damsel, to- [redacted] rock; and he looked nearly [redacted] damsel before he took them off again. [redacted] was only an accessory; the "Hem!" was [redacted].

[redacted] in the mean time, and gone [redacted] of the little nook they were en- [redacted] as if the sole occupation [redacted] look intently—no, intensely,

over, against which they would have had very little protection where they were, made him propose this. It was a step which neither of them liked: Maria, however improper for a young lady, felt that it was bliss to be obliged to be in the cave, the forest, or on the mountain side, with night around her, and no one to protect her but her lover; and all these feelings were Montfort's own, if possible more stronger than they were her's: in addition to which, he always dreaded the leading Maria into danger, as he was never satisfied of her being sufficiently disguised. This plan was, therefore, never resorted to, unless they had some good reason for it; but now the evening threatened more and more, so that at last even Maria could not, with any degree of conscience, any longer declare she thought it would not rain. She therefore hung her coronet upon a bough, saying, "However foolish we may venture to appear to each other, we must try to seem reasonable to the rest of the world;" and they descended the hill, having first hidden all their things which they thought might excite suspicion.



do for a little boy of mine sometimes, who is just your brother's age, and they will be quite well against the morning." But Montfort persisted, and said, "Paolo, you shall not bathe your feet in warm water. You know you did so last week, and it made them so tender you could not walk for two days after it."

"Well then, I will not do it!" said Maria, much wondering what could possess Montfort to tell an unnecessary story, and at the same time to deprive her of a comfort.

But the pertinacious old lady had no idea of giving up so quietly. She told Montfort, "that he knew nothing about it; and at all events it was a great shame for him to speak so harshly to the poor boy, instead of which, as they were amongst strangers, he ought to be kind to him, and love him as a brother should do."

It was in vain that Maria interposed, and assured her, "there never was so kind a brother in the world before as hers."

"Kind indeed! I should not like for my boys

to show such kindness to each other, if they were alone amongst strangers as you are; I never could see any kindness in harsh speeches in my life."

This was the first good-natured act Maria had an opportunity of receiving from one of her own sex for a long time, and there was something so thoroughly warm-hearted in the way the old woman, as she thought, took her part, that it quite inclined the feelings of both towards her; but, on the other hand, the severe rating Montfort was getting, amused Maria so much, that she could not help laughing, and turned away her head lest her doing so should be seen.

The old dame, whose sight was not the best in the world, took it into her head that she was crying, which incensed her more than ever. "There!" said she; "see what you have done! You have made the poor boy cry! and you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

The look of astonishment which Montfort gave at this piece of information was mistaken for one of concern, for the cruelty he had been guilty of—which somewhat mollified his accuser.

"Well," she continued, "I don't believe you meant to do so! But why don't you go over and kiss him, as a brother should do; and make him leave off crying?"

Seeing that neither of them moved, the old woman fixed her eyes upon them as if she could not tell what to make of such strange conduct—nor did she fail to give vent to her thoughts. "Brothers, indeed! you don't seem much like brothers to me! I don't know what to make of you!"

Not daring to increase the suspicion which her words seemed to imply she already had, Montfort went over and kissed Maria: who would have explained that she was not crying, but laughing, although now she was doing neither, from sheer fright—but that for the same reason that guided Montfort, she did not dare to appear even to hesitate.

The old lady being now fully satisfied that they were friends again, and of the propriety of her own conduct in having made them so, immediately went out to get them some supper; which was for-

tunate, as their composure could not have lasted an instant longer.

Lovers usually look so sheepish that one would rather fancy they were trying to steal purses than hearts; but here, it must be confessed, there was some cause for a little awkwardness.

When alone, their eyes did not venture to meet for a long time. At length Montfort said, in an agitated, low voice—almost a whisper, "Maria, you know *I* could not help it!"

"Then I'm sure *I* could not!" returned she, in the same tone.

There was something so comical in this, that at last they did gain courage sufficient to look in each other's faces; where, seeing such concern expressed, as if some terrible calamity had happened, they both burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

When this was over, Montfort tried to put on a little gravity, and said, "But, Maria! what do you think that the person would deserve who should try to betray us?"



"I should be very sorry to be obliged to punish him!"

"And so should I, as that person happens to be Master Paolo."

"What do you mean?"

"Now, look like a penitent, if you please! How could you be so incautious as to think of washing your feet before the old woman? Would it not have discovered that your hands and face were stained?"

"What was I near doing?" said Maria, casting up her eyes, and now getting in a great fright when there could be no use in it.

"Now you know who the culprit was, Maria, what punishment do you think I should have given him if he had betrayed us?"

"You would have forgiven him; but he would never have forgiven himself."

The old woman gave them an excellent supper, and before the evening was over, Monaldeschi had quite won her heart by the attention which he paid to his little brother. "How could I be sure





other!" laying a great stress on 'very,' and, at the same time, giving a little malicious smile aside at Maria, just to hint that he was paying her off for her enjoying his scolding so much.

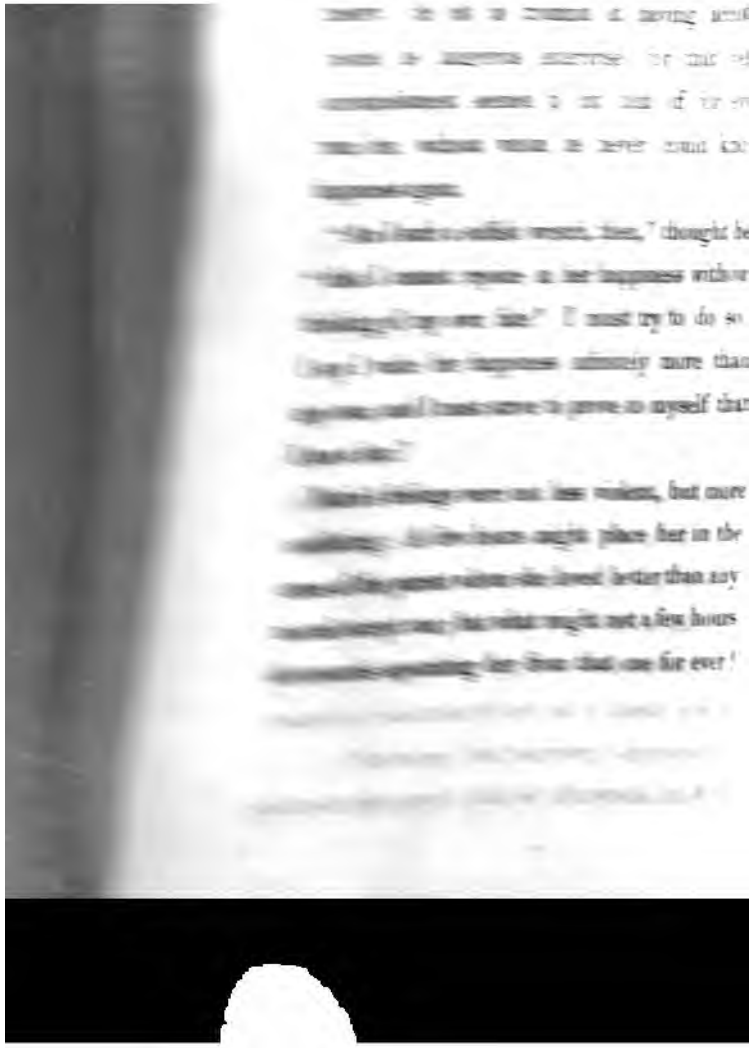
Maria, on whom a strong pastoral fit was brought by what she saw around her, longed to inquire all about a shepherd's life; but did not, of course, venture to do so, as it was to be supposed by the old dame that she knew it all already. One thing, however, it struck her, would never suit her and Montfort—the husband and wife being so much separated as she understood them to be. "I would much rather go out with him to tend the flock, however far off," thought she, "and I could not be exposed to greater hardships than I have been—not near to so great, indeed, for I should not be exposed to fear, for him or myself, the greatest of them all.' But Maria did not allow sufficient for the difference of their ages, when she wondered why the old shepherdess was not of this opinion. Had she been equally old, and had two great grown-up boys, she might have preferred remaining



not conceal her agitation. "What is the boy afraid of?" said the old woman, laughing; "there is no fear of their wishing to make you a soldier, I should think: but I would advise your brother to take care, or they may make him corporal before he knows where he is, for he looks like a soldier already." She then added, that the Emperor was not with the army in person, as he had gone back to V———, the moment he had heard of the Young Queen's escape from her confinement, but that the troops were advancing with all speed.

This information made them decide on leaving their things where they had left them, as they were certain of falling in with some of the troops before long, the smallest party of which would be able to relieve the wants of the Queen—so trifling are the real wants even of the greatest.

The town was in sight almost from the moment they left the cottage, it lying not far from the foot of the hills, a little way out in the plain. They both kept their eyes fixed upon it, and walked as



CHAPTER VI.

"Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE silence was first broken by Maria, who saw the struggle of Montfort's feelings, notwithstanding the tumult of her own, and sought to dispel it.

"My friend! my more than brother!" said she, "you have accomplished the most generous and devoted act that ever yet was done!"

Montfort made no reply to this speech, kind as it was meant to be; but he murmured to himself, "Generous? generous? am I generous?"

Soon afterwards he said, laying his trembling

hand on the arm which Maria had placed within his as she spoke: "Here then, Maria, our wild life ends! Before night you will be in perfect safety, but not under my care!"

Maria did not speak at first, for a sensible reason—because she did not know what to say.

Poor Montfort looked as if the resolution he had so nobly kept under the most trying circumstances was about to give way at once before the terrible thought of their parting. And whether it was so or no, I will not venture to declare; neither will I venture to declare that Maria, who was certainly of this opinion, was displeased at seeing it: but nevertheless, she at once came to his aid, and when he said, "Maria—dear, dear Maria!—do not be offended! I call you so for the last time!—what can I, what ought I, to say to you?" She instantly replied, "Nothing, my friend!" and then added solemnly, "But this my father's child may say to you—I never could bear the term 'repaying gratitude.' No, it is too sweet to feel it, to apply such a cold, heartless phrase to it! and

therefore I do not speak of doing so to you; but I have one means of showing you that mine will never die—and that I now promise: it is, never to do, under any circumstances in which we may be placed, the thing that I can possibly think you would not wish me to do; but always to consult ——."

She was going to add more, when Montfort stopped her with—"No, Maria! you have promised too much already; but if I——"

Maria interrupted him, and said hurriedly, "Then if you are satisfied, for Heaven's sake let us say no more!"

And they did say no more, but went on again in that refuge of deep feeling, silence—looking away from each other for some time; but Maria did not quit his arm. "The last time!" which Montfort had pleaded as his excuse for calling her "dear," was hers. How did she know but that she now leant on him who had so long been her only stay, for the last time? As the idea struck her—









" o'er her soul
Ages of memory seem'd to roll—"

the thoughts of all he had done and suffered for her sake. The arm she rested on was that which had been wounded in her defence—to save her life—and it now pressed lightly, but fondly, upon hers—so gently, that, but that her thoughts were so directed, she would not have felt it. There was more than common life and feeling in that pressure—they seemed to communicate ideas by it—as if, through it, the thoughts that arose in one mind found, by some mysterious agency, a way to the other. To Montfort it gave wilder visions than all before had done — vague and indistinct, but no less blissful.

When something did arouse them from their silence, and they talked again, they only spoke of Maria's meeting with her father, and how it was to be managed to best spare his feelings.

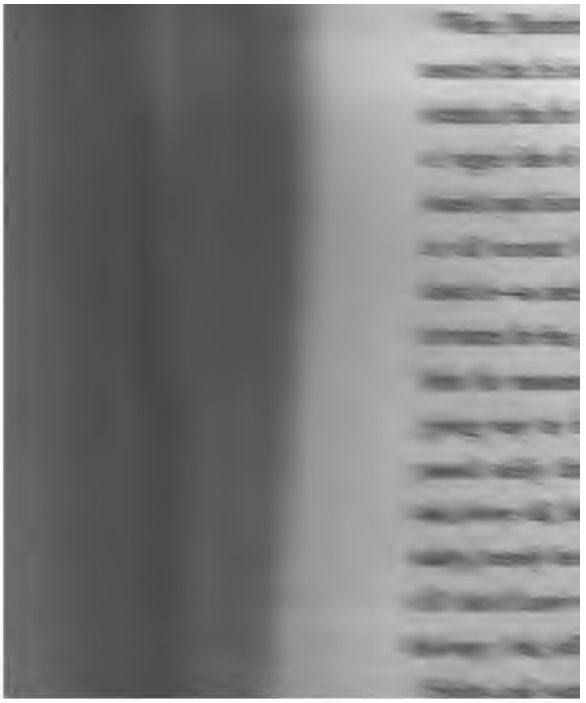
They had now arrived on the lower ridge of the hills, just over the plains, from whence Montfort had hoped to discover the Emperor's troops occu-

pying it, so that they might have gone on without fear; but they found it to be too woody to permit them to distinguish any thing. Maria was therefore exposed to one more trial, which she felt severe, because it was unlooked for.

When Montfort mentioned that he feared to take her forward with him on an uncertainty, and must therefore leave her, Maria's lips quivered, and she said, "This I did not look for!" but she said no more. He then gave her directions, in case of his not returning in a certain time, to go along the ridge until she could get round to the back of the town, where she would, he hoped, meet friends.

"In case of your not returning?" said she; "you never made that speech to me before! What is the meaning of it now?" and she fixed her eyes upon him in a way that said, "I will know the truth!"

Montfort endeavoured to explain, "That he never before knew what directions to give in the event of his not returning, but now it was easy to decide what she had better do in such a case."



try less to avoid it; and the only way she could think of, to prevent his doing so, was to go with him. Then she knew that, on her account, there would be no fear of this.

When he had waited for a little while, Montfort said—"But, Maria, why do you trust less in His aid who has guarded us so long, now that human aid is nearer to us?"

"Oh! it is not that!—it is not that!"

"Then, what is it?" Receiving no answer, he continued—"Your excessive gratitude makes you think too much of my danger; but I must repeat to you, that your being with me would only increase that danger in a very great degree."

"But will you, upon your honour, take every precaution to avoid danger?" replied she, in a manner of so much meaning, that it went far beyond her words.

"Maria, have I deserved that you should think I would not? Would not my being taken and known still risk your safety?"

"Do you truly think it might?"

"I certainly do!"

"Then I am satisfied."

When Montfort left Maria, although he felt assured that he had placed her in a more secure situation than he had almost ever done before, yet a vague idea of some danger hanging over her seized upon his mind, in a way which he could not at all account for: he felt quite superstitious about it—so much so, that he was almost tempted to return for her, and bring her on with him; but then he reasoned with himself on the folly of giving way to imaginary fears, after they had passed safely through so many real dangers;—and, above all, he said, "Shall I really risk her safety, merely because I have an indistinct dread of I don't know what?" He therefore continued his way; but, still, reluctantly.

Sights and sounds which, by ordinary mortals, cannot be thought at all to address the feelings, have often a powerful effect on particular classes of men. For instance, I once, when I had been for some time alone in a foreign land, got quite



most properly about them, had never left him; when the first thing that met his eyes in the place where Maria should have been, was—oh, horror!—a pool of blood! The ground was much trampled since he was there before, but still it did not appear to have been by human feet; but the crushed grass and weeds, and huge gouts and drops of blood scattered about in many different directions, showed that some deadly struggle had taken place.

Whilst he was gazing about in an agony which mocks at description, he discovered some rather long dark hair sticking to the bushes. He sprung towards it with the violence of desperation. It was not Maria's; but he knew it to be Lucy's, and he instantly knew it must have been torn away in her defence.

I have said before, that, on a much less alarming occasion, when he only feared he had mistaken the place where he had left Maria, his heart seemed to die within him; but now there was nothing of this. He could not tell then, or ever afterwards, whether he felt or no. For

Queen's safety, their astonishment was only equalled by their delight,—for, amongst that "unreformed" people, it was not thought a weakness to feel the most intense anxiety about her fate.

One of the subalterns was instantly despatched to inform Count Dornberg, the general commanding, but cautioned not to mention it to any one else, lest a rumour might reach and distract the Emperor before he knew the truth: the youngster's face of delight, however, seemed to tell the story all the way as he rode along.

The other subaltern remained in charge of the post, and Montfort and the commander, with a part of his men, were, in half an hour's gallop, at the foot of the hill where Maria had been left. Here the troops were to remain, until Montfort made a signal for them to advance by firing one of his pistols, as it was thought better for him to go forward first and apprise Maria of their approach.

Montfort ascended the hill with breathless anxiety; for his fears, although he had reasoned

most properly about them, had never left him; when the first thing that met his eyes in the place where Maria should have been, was—oh, horror!—a pool of blood! The ground was much trampled since he was there before, but still it did not appear to have been by human feet; but the crushed grass and weeds, and huge gouts and drops of blood scattered about in many different directions, showed that some deadly struggle had taken place.

Whilst he was gazing about in an agony which mocks at description, he discovered some rather long dark hair sticking to the bushes. He sprung towards it with the violence of desperation. It was not Maria's; but he knew it to be Lion's, and he instantly knew it must have been torn away in her defence.

I have said before, that, on a much less alarming occasion, when he only feared he had mistaken the place where he had left Maria, his heart seemed to die within him; but now there was nothing of this. He could not tell then, or ever afterwards, whether he felt or no. But

the mightiness of the occasion only seemed to add to his maddened energy. In the time that I have taken to write the shortest word, he had seen this sight, found the hair, bounded forward, and shrieked out "Maria!" and once more was he answered, when he had no hope, but in a faint and exhausted voice, from a cliff immediately over his head.

"Here I am," said she; "but do not be frightened, for *I* am safe!"

He rushed up the cliff at the risk of his life, instead of going round to the back of it where the ascent was easy. Whilst he was ascending, Maria again said, "For God's sake, do not be frightened at what you will see!" But ere her speech was ended, she was before him, covered with blood from head to foot.

"This is not *my* blood: *I* am safe!" exclaimed Maria again.

"Is it true?" said Montfort, seizing her desperately with both his hands, and holding her with his muscles braced up as if he were going to tear her in pieces.

"It *is* true! But poor Lion—" She could say no more, for her violent crying rendered her inarticulate.

Montfort's arms had dropped by his side, powerless as those of an infant. He followed Maria a few paces to where Lion lay, streaming with blood, dreadfully mangled, and apparently dying.

"It was for me! It was for my life!" said Maria, pointing to him.

Before Montfort knew Maria was safe, he was benumbed—his fears went beyond feeling; but this lesser grief was within its range. He knelt down and hugged the poor faithful mangled beast in his arms, who was not so far gone as to be insensible, for he made an effort to raise his head and lick his hand; but when he found he had not strength for that, he laid himself down again, and moved his feet once or twice convulsively in the air to show his joy.

But neither did Montfort nor Maria waste time in unavailing regret. They instantly bestirred themselves to do what more was in their power for

him, Maria having already staunched the blood of his worst wounds.

She now sat down again, and held his head in her lap, as she had been doing before Montfort arrived, having first demanded, "Have you heard of my father?"

"He is well, and you are safe. But is there any danger still near?"

"No,—none, now you are here!"

Montfort ran a little distance to a stream which he had observed, and brought his hat full of water, and threw over the exhausted animal. This he did several times, and it seemed to revive him a great deal. Montfort caught at the hope, and said, "Maria! I trust he will recover. I think his present state principally proceeds from exhaustion. What has happened?"

Whilst Montfort now washed about his wounds as much as he could do without making them bleed afresh, Maria told him—"About half an hour ago, a little boy, who had two huge dogs with him, passed by, driving a flock of sheep up to the

hills. The dogs came upon me before I could hide myself, and they both sprung at me so fiercely, that, but for Lion, I am sure they would have killed me. He was lying down at a little distance at the moment, but instantly flew to my assistance, and after a desperate struggle killed one of the dogs and drove away the other; but they were so furious, that whilst he was worrying one, the other always attempted to attack me, which would instantly make him give up his advantage, to fly to my help. This not only prolonged the struggle, but, in addition to the dreadful wounds they have given him, I think has exhausted him so much. The boy ran away crying at the first, and, fearing some men might come back with him, I brought Lion up here, for he could not walk. But do you think it possible that he can live?"

"I do, indeed! I hope it now more than ever, for I thought at first his state proceeded greatly from exhaustion."

Even whilst they were speaking, Lion had evidently gained strength.

Montfort now hastily collected a heap of leaves, on which they placed him after he had lapped a little water, every kind act being acknowledged in some expressive way. They stood over him, watching with countenances of as much anxiety and sorrow as if he had been a suffering being of their own race; and seeking that mutual support, from holding each other in a half embrace, which friends always do seek in such distress. Nor is their grief to be wondered at, when it is considered what they owed him—Maria, perhaps, a life; or, at the least, escape from severe wounds, and from the dread of that most horrible of all diseases;—Montfort, more,—he felt it to be much more than his own life.

"Oh, Maria!" said he, "what is there that I would not do to restore him?"

Maria only replied by holding his hand more firmly.

He continued, "But he is getting better every moment! Do you not think so?"

"I do, and I now venture to hope. But does



it not seem my wretched destiny that all my defenders should suffer for me?"

"And do you not think they gladly suffer?" said Montfort, with such enthusiastic devotion shining in his countenance, that it made Maria sigh again as she stole a glance at it. She asked, "Shall we be able to move him now? for I will not leave him, whatever is the consequence; and I know you will not ask me to do so."

So absorbed had they been in Lion's fate, that until this moment Montfort had not explained his success to Maria, although she had inferred it from his answer to her question about her father. He now said, "I could not ask you to leave him, unless safe, under any circumstances; but, happily, there is no need to do so now; for oh, Maria! it is only necessary for me to make a signal, and you will be surrounded by your father's troops." This made her feel more than ever the wretchedness of what had just happened.

In a few minutes more they were so satisfied of Lion's fast recovering, that they consulted what

was now to be done. They decided the party below should remain near them, but send off messengers for a surgeon for Lion, and a litter to remove him on; also a female dress for Maria, which Montfort had intended to have ordered, but, in his anxiety to get back to her, had forgotten: a carriage, they concluded, would be sent by Count Dornberg. In her present dress, Maria was determined not to be seen by any one else; and it was also now so covered with blood and dirt as to be unbearable.

Montfort did not venture again to leave Maria alone even whilst he went down to the dragoons, but he fired a pistol, and instantly was seen dashing up the hill a party of Imperial Lancers. Montfort made them a sign to halt, and then went and communicated the Queen's wishes to the officer, who led his men just under the brow of the hill, as soon as Montfort had briefly explained to him the cause of delay.

On Montfort's returning to Maria, she had gained so much confidence from Lion's progress,



that they began to talk of other things. Montfort said to her, "How much I now regret that I did not give way to your wishes to go on with me! What danger and distress would it not have prevented!"

"I dreaded that you would think of that," said Maria; "but you know yourself you ought not to do so, for you acted on the soundest reason, instead of giving way to the womanish fears of one who I believe had lost hers; for Heaven knows that my fears were womanish, and nothing else!"

Maria looked aside when she talked of her fears having been only womanish, but her words gave Montfort some comfort; and he received still more when she added, "And to tell you the truth, had you given way to my folly then, I should now think you had done, not only what was weak, but what was wrong. But mind," she continued, with an earnest gravity, in which however, in spite of her situation, there was something of a smile lurking, "that this honest confession must

not make you attend one bit the less to my next request, whatever it may be; for you may depend upon it that that will be reasonable."

"That smile is a happy omen," replied Montfort, "and see! our dear, dear Li is taking notice of us. But oh, Maria! I shall never again have the power to deny any request of yours; for even if you make one, it will be the request of a Queen."

Maria did not remark upon the oddity of her lover's regretting that he should never again be able to give her a refusal, though, in any other case, one who loved laughter so much would not have let the opportunity slip: but her dark eyes distended, and she looked more reproach than she uttered, when she said, "And will you ever look upon me as a Queen? That were cruelty indeed! I did hope, after what has passed between us, never to be looked on in any other light by you than that of a grateful woman—a friend. And I *do* hope it!" said she, her countenance resuming all its openness, and frankly

placing her hand in his,—"for he who does not break his promises will promise it to me."

This was one of the sort of speeches for which Montfort had not always a reply ready, for fear of saying too much, and for fear of saying too little. Maria, therefore, after musing a minute, went on: "But you must promise me more! (see how exacting I am.) You have too kind an opinion of me, I know; but do not believe but that all our sex may have caprices, and I only demand from you, as an act of mere justice, if you ever think you see the caprices of a woman in me, which I know I am capable of—that you do not set them down as the caprices of rank, or power, which I am not capable of."

"I do not believe you capable of thinking, or feeling, or doing, any thing wrong; nor, whatever may happen, shall I ever think so."

"But you shall!" said Maria, "and I wish you did think so now! for what friend can possibly stand such an absurd opinion as that of her never doing wrong? Not to always do right,

s the lot of finite beings: and, happily for us, as long as we do not do very wrong, it is neither inconsistent with friendship, nor with the confidence n each other which I am sure we possess. On the ontrary, it sometimes strengthens that friendship, by giving it an opportunity of showing itself, in trying to point out to us our errors, to save us from them for the future, and in forgetting them when they are past. I have spoken of the very best of our race: amongst which number I do not include myself," continued she, smiling, "neither shall you; but, nevertheless, this friendship I expect from you: nor do I think I ever



would show him again whenever she saw that it was required, be her situation what it might—then could he but promise so to do to her, if it should be needed, and if he had the opportunity?

Maria was somewhat comforted by the assurance he gave her on this head, and also by her having explained to him that she was not quite perfection; nor did it take from her satisfaction when he, by the following speech, qualified what he had said when he accused her of being any thing so unfeminine.

"I only meant," said he, "that in any case of real moment, I feel assured your principles and your feelings would lead you to do what you thought right; and that, generally speaking, would *be* right. But I by no means suppose you have not your share of the minor errors of humanity. Heaven knows I would not wish to make you out to be perfection!"

Now, it must be admitted, that in the above conversation Montfort behaved as correctly as any

young gentleman could possibly have done; and Maria was firmly of this opinion, when, unfortunately for him, after it was over, she said, pointing down to the bottom of her trousers (which he now for the first time discovered to be torn a little above the ankle), "You see my fears were not all imaginary."

"What's that—a bite?" shrieked out he in horror, running all the words of his sentence into one, so that you could not possibly trace a pause between them.

"Yes; but I am sure that it has not broken the skin."

Never was young lady's leg treated with less ceremony. He seized it so violently that he almost upset Maria in doing so, pulled up her trousers, tore down her sock, and smoothed his hand over the part, as a tailor smoothes a bit of cloth when he is feeling its quality, only looking at it so piercingly that not the smallest puncture of Snip's finest needle could possibly have escaped him; and all this as little dreaming of any im-

propriety as the said tailor would be in acting thus by the said cloth.

Maria, however, was of a different way of thinking, and she pushed his head on one side with much more energy than she was wont to use, saying, "In the name of goodness, what *are* you doing?" This caused him to look up, which he did with his mouth half open, and a most innocent stare; but when he saw the blushes he had brought to Maria's cheek, he began to think that young lady's legs were not things to be lightly meddled with.

"Oh, dear Maria! I have such a horror of the bite of a dog! But you are not angry with me?"

"Why, I told you I was not bitten."

"I thought you might be mistaken; or, rather, I did not think at all, I believe."

"Oh! I know it was all through kindness; but——"

"But," said Montfort, taking away the beginning of her sentence, and putting an ending of his own to it,—"but you forgive me?"

"Forgive you? What a word to use!"

"Well, then, I never——"

It is uncertain whether or no he was going to promise never to look at any young lady's legs again without first duly asking permission, for Maria did not like the subject as a matter of conversation, and, still not a little discomposed, said, "Well, nonsense! never mind—tell me about my father."

Maria certainly did not consider Montfort's conduct altogether so correct in this affair as in their previous dialogues; but it is not thought that it pleased her less on that account when she had once got over her trepidation, especially when she reflected that it bespoke an interest about her safety which outweighed every other earthly consideration.

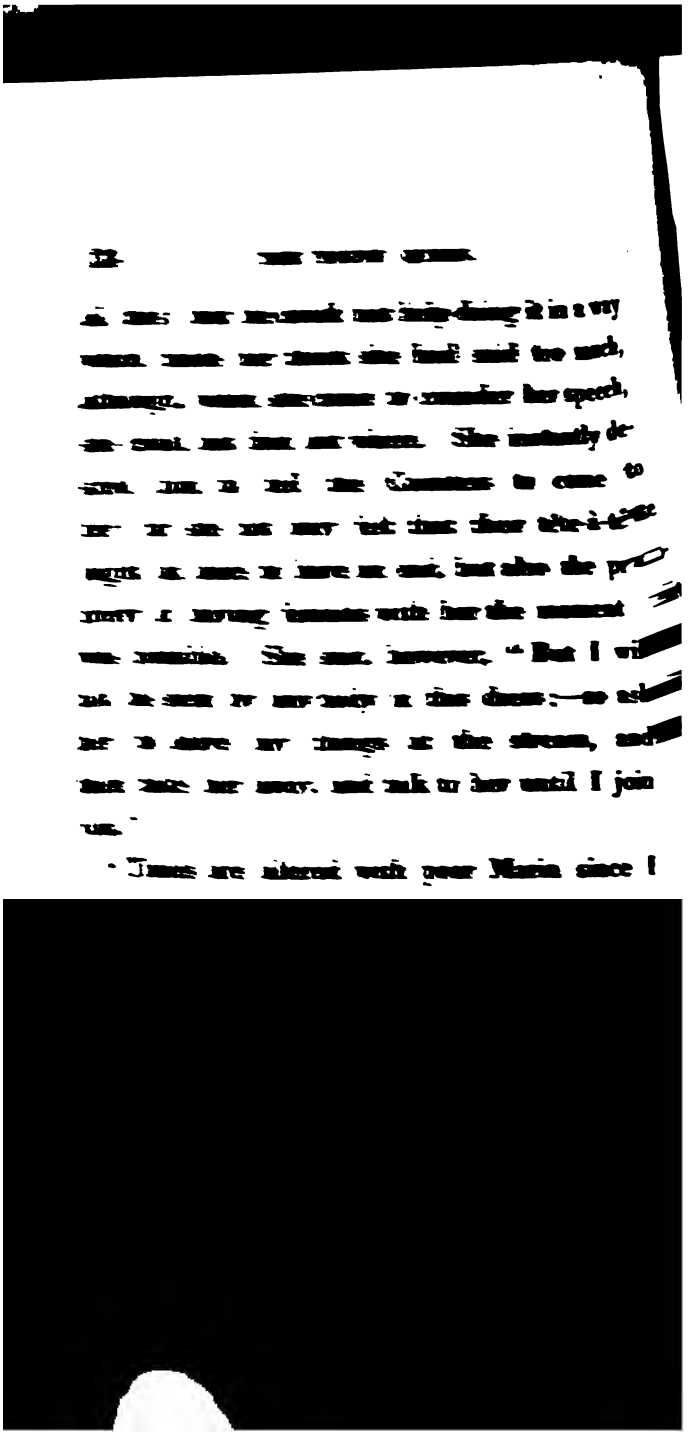
By the time Montfort had repeated to her the little that he knew, the things sent for had arrived, and also the Countess of Dornberg, the General's wife,—who, because there was no danger, and she thought it would have a pretty effect, had

insisted on campaigning with her husband. When Montfort returned from the *parlé* to which he had been summoned by the cavalry trumpets, and told Maria that the lady waited permission to approach, she said, "I now begin to feel my trammels again. I also feel, my friend, that I am leaving your protection. But mind!" continued she—I should have said sternly, if such a term could apply to so gentle a creature,—"I repeat, that if once during the whole course of your life you think I can ever forget what I owe you, from that moment I shall wish you had left me to my fate."

"Maria, whatever may happen, never think that I can possibly suppose your feelings to be wrong. I could as soon doubt the feelings of an angel in heaven."

Maria shook her head in disapprobation of the terms he had used, but not of the meaning they conveyed. She said, "From henceforth, then, doubt does not exist between us."

Maria did expect Montfort to press her hand for





strained him. The Countess was profuse in her congratulations to Montfort; and, what he felt much more obliged to her for, had been courtier enough to consult Maria's taste instead of her own, and had brought her a plain but very becoming dress, to put on.

When Maria appeared to them from behind her leafy screen, and he recollected the state of the dress she had just taken off, Montfort did begin to think that civilized life had some advantages, although never was man more enamoured of a savage. Maria, it is true, had, with a most pardonable vanity, taken some pains in dressing herself; not because she was to be seen by more people than she had of late been accustomed to, but because the one—the only one she cared to please in her dress- would see her in a different guise from what he had lately done.

Whilst she was dressing, she made use of the stream as a looking-glass; and it was uncivil enough to show her what did not please her, which caused her to say—"Alack! my hair is

sadly short! But, never mind!" continued she, after a moment's pause—"I know where one of its longest tresses lies hid!" And this thought caused her to come forth to them, conscious of her power in the only place where she wished for power, and looking conscious.

As Montfort's eyes met her's, she did trace a look of triumph in them, (and it was the first!) as he thought of his having saved such a being;—but, notwithstanding Maria's being so conceited about her new dress, she was more grateful than he was to her old one, and thought only of its good services to her, but not of its present state: she therefore had rolled it up in a bundle, which she now begged him to bring with them, "For," said she, "I never will part with it whilst I live."

CHAPTER VII.

"You gods, look down,
And from your sacred vials pour your graces
Upon my daughter's head!"

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Countess really was affected, as much as she could be affected, at meeting the Young Queen under such circumstances; and by all was she received with the greatest enthusiasm.

As the Count, who had just arrived, approached with his suite, Maria whispered to Montfort, "Now, pray, stand close by me!" and for a moment she seemed agitated, but quickly resumed herself, and queened it with the utmost propriety; to Montfort's great astonishment, for he could not help

thinking of the time when he found her throwing stones into the lake.

Count [redacted] was a man of great talents, but one of those rough kind of mortals who are found in almost every court; and whom, I suspect, monarchs like to have about them by way of a contrast. Certainly the Count stood out from a crowd of mere courtiers, like a sturdy oak in a grove of willows: yet, with the contradiction of our nature, he had married one who might be looked on as an epitome of courtierism: she was certainly very pretty: which is the only way of accounting for it.





offers of service, are indeed healing to feelings that have suffered much since last we met; but which would have suffered, how infinitely more than I can express, had not one of your number—had not one of my father's subjects—been with me, to show me, gentlemen, what devotion you are capable of!" then, pointing to Montfort, she continued, "That I am once more surrounded by you—that I once more see my father—I owe to him. But that father must tell you all that I owe him."

Fortunately for Montfort's modesty, the congratulations that were showered upon him could only be short, as the litter having at that moment arrived, Maria begged him to superintend Li's being placed on it; upon whose head she kept her hand during the operation, to comfort him, as it gave him some pain; and said to his bearers, "Take care of him! for he, too, has saved my life."

It was arranged, that Maria and Montfort, accompanied by the Countess, should immediately set out for the capital, not stopping until they

arrived there; and, as it was evident they could not take Lion with them under such circumstances, they were much pleased when the surgeon told them he intended to give him something to make him sleep, and that he might follow them on his litter with perfect safety. Montfort had previously offered Maria, now that she was safe, to remain with him.

"What!" said she, "and who shall bring me to my father, but you? Under any other circumstances I would not leave him myself; but I cannot consent to this. Besides, if he is kept sleeping, he cannot miss us."

In half an hour after their arrival at D——, they



circumstance annoyed Maria more even than it had ever done before, for she fancied all her former offences in this way would be taken in aggravation of her present; and she was the more disposed to blame herself, because, on reviewing the circumstance, she could not admit that the cause was a sufficient excuse. It was merely from being called "Your Majesty."

Although those who first met Maria had of course used the term, in the hurry and excitement of that meeting it had not fallen clearly and distinctly upon her ear, so as to strike forcibly on her feelings; but whilst waiting at D—— for their carriages, with only a few persons present, she had an opportunity to hear it and to mark it, and it sounded as the knell of her departing happiness. It forced into her mind, in a manner that could not be resisted, all she had so long striven to keep out of it. It spoke to her of the greatest evil—the evil of guilt excepted—that the human heart is doomed to bear: it told her, in a voice that would be heard,—of eternal separation from the

object of her love. She burst into a flood of tears, which she could neither attempt to conceal nor control.

Fortunately the persons around her took her tears for tears of joy; and the Countess of Dornberg said, "It must be delightful—almost too much so—to your Majesty to find yourself restored to all you have been accustomed to."

"Oh! very delightful indeed!" sobbed Maria, half broken-hearted; but she soon said to herself, "God forgive me this ingratitude! I must think of my dear, dear father—and of him only."

Her tears soon ceased after she was in the car-

[redacted]

in a very different light from each other. She to whom it was made interpreted it into a lover's lecture, ending in the lover's appeal of, "And dear, dear Maria, why will you give way to such grief when you know how wretched it makes the heart that beats for you alone—for you alone of all the millions who inhabit this earth?" Whereas the Countess was only struck with surprise at his not saying, "Your Majesty," and at his using such a word as "must." She said to herself, pityingly, "Poor fellow! he will never make his fortune at court, I plainly perceive! he certainly has a good opportunity, but it will be quite thrown away upon him, for he is a mere rough soldier, and nothing more. I am sure that the Queen, however grateful to him she may be, will wish to have him about her as little as possible."

Nothing occurred during their journey worthy of remark, except that before the end of it, Maria had argued herself into the belief, "That, in all this world, there could not be found a greater goose than her lover." She had long been of this

opinion, but it now struck her more forcibly than ever, for in the face opposite to her's she saw the same deep traces left by his late terrible fright on her account, that she was aware her own had betrayed long after his danger in the hut was over. "And can he think that such effects of such feelings may be seen with impunity? Can he think they ought to be? Can he blame human nature for giving way before them? Can he suppose it possible to look upon a face so marked, to know that it was for our sakes, and (unless, indeed, the face be very ugly!) not to love? Oh! he is very, very silly!"

But here Maria had made a little blunder, for Montfort had long ceased to blame himself for loving her, if he ever did so. To love her had long seemed to him almost a part of his religion. He only thought it wrong to try to win her love in return; and, to say the truth, he did not now like to think of his own conduct towards her during the earlier part of that day, however much he loved to dwell upon the result of it. Notwith-



standing his very enlarged ideas of gratitude, he could hardly have the conscience to refer to that cause all she had then said to him. And why had she so spoken? Why, but to soothe the feelings he must have betrayed? The subject would not bear to be thought on.

The next day at noon they arrived at V——. The Countess had prudently proposed that Maria should remain at a country house a few miles from the city until the Emperor was informed of her safety and arrival. But to this she would by no means consent. She thought she apportioned her consideration to her father's feelings, to Montfort's advantage, and to her own impatience, most fairly, by at once driving to the Chancellor's, (who was a friend as well as a servant of the Emperor,) and thence sending him, with Montfort, before her, to break the intelligence. This would not only delay their meeting as little as possible, but would make her lover of as much importance in the affair as she knew how to do; for which she was naturally anxious.

Although the Countess's plan was by far the most sensible, yet Marie's succeeded better than might have been expected, for no report reached the Emperor before those who were to inform him arrived. Here, however, a slight disarrangement of it took place, as it had been intended that the Chancellor should first see him alone, and then Montfort was to be called in; but the former accidentally entered by a way he was not accustomed to do, as the Chancellor was cautioning Montfort to remain in a waiting-room until called for.

The confusion into which both were thrown by





"You mean kindly; but you torture me. I can bear any thing better than this."

Montfort could support it no longer. He exclaimed, "Your daughter is safe: the Queen is in perfect safety, sire!"

"Do not deceive me!" said the Emperor, in a trembling tone, which showed he hardly dared to believe so great a blessing.

"She is safe! and only waits to see you, until you can support it."

"Instantly! Instantly! Let me fly to her!"

The Chancellor was now huddling off to bring Maria, and there is no doubt that in a reasonable time he would have accomplished it; but Montfort heard a voice which had always the effect on him of putting every idea of form to flight—a voice, whose slightest tone, whose faintest cry, he had been in the habit of flying to—and now that voice was saying in agony, "Stand back! I will go on! I will go on!" He was in an instant at her side—had freed her from those who sought to prevent her coming to her father too suddenly; and in

me long to tell you all; but
rescued me from prison until this
he has been my sole protector
to him alone, under heaven, we
er met again."
gratitude, which, whether it be
always admired, shone so beau-
, that it is not to be wondered at,
agitation, no one remarked a
lie beneath it. The Emperor
Montfort to his heart, and say,
will never, never leave us!"
by this time had recovered
ering something about "a
or's feelings," the crowd

another instant she was hanging on her father's neck.

Never was there a less royal scene; at least a less stately one. All who were near rushed into the Emperor's presence unopposed. To be sure, the Chancellor did make something like an effort to prevent them, but the kindness of the old man's heart overcame the schooling of a long life; and when he attempted to lay hold of the handle of the door, he could not see it for the glistening of his eyes. All rushed in—the many, who did not calculate because their joy prompted them to do so;—the few, who did calculate, because they knew, that any thing proceeding from apparent love to his daughter would be a crime more likely to be rewarded than punished by the Emperor. One old lady sat in a corner, laughing and crying at the same time. She had attended Maria when she was a child.

When the tumult was somewhat abated, Maria, with one arm still about her father's neck, took Montfort's hand and said, "My father! but for



him your daughter would not now be alive! Mere life, however, is the least I owe him. It will indeed take me long to tell you all; but from the time he rescued me from prison until this happy moment, he has been my sole protector and guide; and to him alone, under heaven, we owe it that we ever met again."

Enthusiastic gratitude, which, whether it be practised or no, is always admired, shone so beautifully around her, that it is not to be wondered at, if, amidst such agitation, no one remarked a deeper feeling to lie beneath it. The Emperor could only press Montfort to his heart, and say, "Promise that you will never, never leave us!"

The Chancellor by this time had recovered himself, and, on whispering something about "a father's and a daughter's feelings," the crowd vanished.

"Oh, how has all that I have suffered for you now rolled away from me like a monstrous dream! and to him we owe it!" said the Emperor, seizing Montfort's hand for the hundredth time.

"Oh, teach me, my child, to bear to him your own feelings, for they must be all gratitude!"

"That would be hard indeed," thought Maria, "but I know that you will love him as much as one man can love another."

And night at length went down upon the towers of A——; and there was one sad heart within the walls of princes—not Maria's! her's was more like the face of the old lady, who laughed and cried at the same time, than like any thing else, But Montfort's was very sad indeed, for he employed himself in that most unpleasant of occupations—finding fault with one's-self, which is so very different from finding fault with one's neighbour.

Montfort sat alone in a magnificent suite of apartments, near the Emperor's, which were, from hat day, to be his own; and thus he arraigned himself—and without any one to take his part, too, now Maria was not by. "At length, then," said he, in that deliberate manner in which we seem to measure out our words so carefully, as if

we were determined not to give one of them an atom more or less than its proper weight, although we are really thinking of nothing less than of words at the moment—"At length, then, we are, and must be, separated for ever—that is, separated compared to what we have been; for I can never again individually protect Maria, because she can never again require it: and although we may meet daily, yet it will be with all the disgusting forms of the world about us. And what do I find to support me under this?—nothing!—not even my own approbation of my conduct; for the misery I now endure too plainly shows that my feelings towards her were all selfish, and not generous; else should I be most wretched at the moment that her safety is secured!"

Montfort here was wrong, and did himself wrong. Even he must have admitted (although fully determined to find himself guilty,) he did not love her when he set about her rescue, and that he would have attempted it just as sincerely

if he had loved any other person: and, surely, with such a being always before him, placed, too, in situations calculated to call forth the exact character most formed to captivate him, he need not have been so surprised that that which began in mere generosity should end in love.

But although the poor man's brain was so mystified, he had sense enough left to conclude by thinking, "That his feelings could not be all selfish either, as he felt that if her happiness required it, he would lightly lay down his life for her." However, it must be confessed, that by this time he had some idea her happiness required the opposite of this, which was the reason, perhaps, he was so much inclined to make the offer.

Debating within himself on what is contained in the last sentence, Montfort naturally reflected on the promise Maria had made to him. Although it appears a plain matter enough, he twisted and considered it in a thousand different ways. He at first thought that he was very happy—then, that he was not happy—then, that he could not tell

whether he was or no. He had heard it said, the most lively sort of gratitude is excited by a person who rather stretches a point in our favour—does what is not strictly right for our sakes; but he could not exactly admit this to be such a very agreeable mixture of sin and sentiment. He loved Maria far too well to be able to bear the idea that she should for any body's sake do any thing in which there was the shadow of wrong; and he felt somewhat uneasy about her promise, although he could almost have fallen down at her feet and worshipped her for having made it. He now sadly perplexed himself how he might take all the fault (if fault did exist,) on himself, and off one he loved still better. "If that dear, dear promise," said he, "does mean what I sometimes almost think it does, oh! how I now wish I had said that to her which I then thought wrong! for had I done so, she would have yielded to my entreaty, and no blame could have rested on her: but if I did not entreat with words, perhaps the misery of my looks implored still more than they could have done."

It certainly requires, as I have before observed, more ingenuity to deceive ourselves than to deceive other people! Had not Montfort exerted some of this ingenuity, would it not have struck him, that had Maria yielded to his importunity, it would have only added an additional weakness to her other defaults; and this, too, with less excuse, as his selfishness would have deserved no such return: whereas, the promise being voluntary, and such as she had a right to make, however unwise it might be in her to do so, nobody but a lover, who is generally fastidious, and always unreasonable, could have found fault with it on the score of propriety.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Tell me, mine own,—
Where hast thou been preserved? where lived? how found
Thy father's court?"

SHAKSPEARE.

AND now, I dare say, the real devourer of novel and romance (who may forget that this is true history!) is feasting her thoughts on all the perplexities which their love will get Maria and Montfort into—is revelling in the ideas of cruel parents, harsh and haughty brothers, envious sisters, false friends, and other elegant horrors which cause "true love never to run straight"—that she is saying, "Well! this story has been all simplicity and

nonsense as yet—no intricacies to unravel—no melting expressions—in fact, I don't think Maria has said 'Ah, me!' once, which she ought to be ashamed of; but now, I have no doubt, we shall be fully repaid."

Alas! how sadly will she find herself mistaken! for although Maria's "true love," Heaven knows! did not "run straight," it was not from any of these causes. Had not the lady, also, skipped so very much, she might have found out that Maria had no near relations except her father; than whom never was there a more kind or simple-hearted parent. He was just what the late Emperor of Austria* was, which the Radicals, to a man, I will answer for them, will not believe a word of.

"What!" they will say, "an Emperor a good man? No, no! We are not to be taken in by the common opinion in favour of rank. We are too unprejudiced to believe that an Emperor can possibly be a good man."

Montfort did not think he could possibly be a

* The Emperor Francis.

bad one—that is, this Emperor, for the simple reason—that he was Maria's father.

Just as Montfort had got himself into the pleasant belief that Maria was full as good, nay, better than he had ever before thought her, but that he himself was a great deal worse, he was startled from his reverie by a knock at his door.

For my own part, I should hardly think there was much difference between the tap at the door of an Emperor, and the tap at the door of any body else; but Montfort must have found in it the same royalty that he did in Maria's most wild tricks—her throwing stones, for instance, which he pronounced to be done quite like a Queen, though where he had seen Queens practising this amusement I do not know—for the moment he heard it, he fancied who it was given by, although such a visit was one hardly to be calculated on. He was, however, so sure of it, that instead of saying "Come in," he went himself and opened the door.

"My dear young friend!" said the Emperor,

as he entered, "We have been (there was no occasion to name who was the second person of the 'we,') talking of you ever since. You must fancy what a father's feelings are on such an occasion, for I am totally unable to describe them; but I trust you will do two persons, whom you have given—to the one a life, and to the other the only object that makes life desirable—the justice to think of them always in the light of a sister and a father, for such their feelings must always be towards you; and I do entreat, above all things, that you never allow an idea of our worldly rank to enter your mind; for services such as yours, and gratitude such as I trust is ours, sets all rank at nought."

Montfort was more struck with the manner than the words of this speech. It seemed what it really was—that of one who knew his debt to be so great, that it must be paid in other ways than words. He replied, "The happiness of having been of any service in restoring such a daughter to such a father, is not increased by their being a Queen and an Emperor."

"And that daughter I owe to you, and to you alone: God bless and reward you for the gift."

When the Emperor had somewhat regained his composure, he said, "My child and I shall naturally wish to be alone as much as possible for some time—but that 'alone' must always include you: and to-night we particularly wish you to be with us, unless you are fatigued, which I suppose you cannot be, as she does not complain."

The Emperor remained a considerable time with Montfort, and by no means lessened his opinion of that good for which he had given him credit on, to be sure, rather slender grounds. He repeatedly tried to talk of other things, but his efforts were unavailing; and he at length said, pressing Montfort's hand, "It is useless for me to attempt to entertain you yet! Nature will have its way. I can talk, can think, only on one subject: but I know you will bear with me and my child for a while, and then," continued he, smiling through the tears he could not hide, "perhaps you will find us more agreeable."

It was rather hard upon my poor hero, that the more chaste in whom his heart was kindly disposed rose in his opinion, the more did he himself sink in it. When the Emperor left him, he shut himself up in his innermost apartment, thinking he never could fly far enough from danger—the danger of ever making such a father regret, that the daughter whom he now exulted over had been saved: which he might yet do, if he were to see her wearing out her existence in hopeless love. Maximilian's thoughts did not work out this picture so far, but he had a shadowy idea of it; and he said, "Oh! grant—oh! grant that I alone may suffer! Oh! guard and protect her happiness!—save her,



But, notwithstanding his prayers and his vows so lately uttered, he went to the dining-room a few minutes before there was any need, in hopes of finding Maria there alone; not, however, with any intention of breaking those vows, but he argued (and I should be very much ashamed of my hero if he, as well as other people, could not always find a good reason for doing what he wished) "That he should not be so agitated if he first met Maria alone, as he might be if her father were present, and therefore would be less likely to let her see what she ought not to see."

In the dining-room, sure enough, he did find Maria—and upon the self-same errand. She came forward to him with outstretched hand, just as she used to do in the woods: instead of asking him, as might have been expected, any of those questions of less interest, which would have made them slide more easily into other conversation, she at once alluded to her own feelings, "We were never before so long under the same roof without meeting. I should ask you the most extraordinary

question that ever a daughter did ask, if I did not know the answer which you must give, out of regard to my feelings."

"I guess it!" said Montfort.

Maria continued, "How do you like my father?"

Had Montfort thought it necessary to tell the truth, he would have said, "I think him almost worthy of having such a child!" which was more than he would have ventured to have declared of any other mortal: but he did say, "I certainly could not very well tell you that I did not admire him; but I mean to speak the truth when I assure you I am inclined to like him more than any man I ever met with before."

Maria believed him with her whole heart, and said exultingly, "I knew you would!" But although she "knew he would," the knowledge that "he did" made her look very happy. Nevertheless, she before was certainly firm in the belief, that he could not have helped loving any sort of person whom she acknowledged as a father: but, at the same time, she felt assured, he could not



help loving such a father, when he came to know him, although the daughter should have been of no peculiar interest to him.

Montfort felt quite obliged to Maria for thus covering, as it were, their first meeting under new circumstances, with so much conversation; but he was far too simple to guess that it was intentional on her part. "What! his guileless and single-hearted Maria have so much art?" Stupid man! shall I never make you understand that it was the very goodness of that heart that made her thus join the wiliness of the serpent to the gentleness of the dove? She had rightly guessed that Montfort would blame himself for having been more unguarded to her lately than he had been before; and although she thought this good blame thrown away, and which she did not doubt he would require much more upon some other occasion, she determined to prevent, as far as possible, his betraying any thing further to occasion him regret. She had also another motive—to make him as much at ease as possible

before her father arrived, for fear the latter should see any thing in his manner towards her to alarm him.

Montfort had, in truth, looked forward to this first meeting with no small dread, for he felt that all his schooling had not given him the least more command over himself. He recollected that Maria had sometimes, when her feelings were much moved, put her hand into his without speaking. Now this, when they were alone, he could barely get through with propriety; but with her father looking on, it would have been "ruin upon ruin." But the same fears on her part, and a little more thought, had saved them from all he thus dreaded.

Maria had just said, "Even now that I am safe with that father whom I never thought to see again, you will never hear me thank you for all you have done for me!" and Montfort had just time to reply, "Does not your even hinting at such a thing almost approach to a breach of our contract of confidence?" when the Emperor entered.

Montfort soon found how much he had



been mistaken in supposing that Maria and he would never meet without form, for not only had he seen her alone, but now their dinner was as private as it was plain. One old grey-haired servant brought in the few dishes of which it consisted, but did not remain in the room. Maria said to Montfort, as they sat down, glancing at the table, "Do you think there will be enough for us? But we must agree not to tell my father a word about our outrageous appetites."

"What is that?" said the Emperor; "agreeing not to tell me something? I must know every thing, that I may be able to judge how my girl behaved, and may scold her if she was an unreasonable coward—for, thank Heaven! I feel that I could scold her now, although a little while ago I thought I should never be able to scold again, if she came back to me."

The father and daughter looked at each other as if they would have preferred a kiss to all the dinner that was before them, but they could not very well get up in the midst of it for that purpose.

Montfort replied, "I do not think you will have much to scold about."

"Oh, but I must judge of that myself, by hearing the whole story from beginning to end from you, as soon as dinner is over; for in the little that Maria has had time to tell me, she has, of course, made herself out a heroine."

When dinner was over, they drew two small sofas close to the fire, on one of which sat Maria and her father, their hands clasped in each other's as if they could never hold fast enough what each had dreaded never to have held again; and opposite them sat Montfort, looking scarcely less delighted, for it did not require a great effort to make him forget his own gloomy future in the present happiness of her whom he loved. Could he have forgotten the having been alone with Maria amidst woods and mountains, he would have thought this the happiest evening he had ever spent in his life.

The Emperor did not, in a posing manner, bid Montfort begin his tale, but he asked each

some questions, which drew them into it; and they then went on, helping, and occasionally correcting, each other, as either's modesty interfered with the truth: and thus hour after hour flew away unheeded.

I may as well remark here, by the way, that however different my reader's opinion may be, this was a tale the Emperor was never tired of hearing. Afterwards, when he was alone with Maria, he made her tell it; when he was alone with Montfort, he made him tell it; when they were both with him, he made them tell it in concert: so that at last Maria said laughingly, "I certainly will write out my version of the story, claiming, of course, as great a share of praise for myself as possible; another person, I have no doubt, will do the same; and then, if you please, we will write it together; so that you can have it to read in every shape and form whenever you please—I only regret that Li is not learned enough to give his 'Notes and Observations.'"

The Emperor took her joke in good earnest, and insisted on their doing so; and it is from these

accounts that I derive this true history. I have merely to observe, that where Maria and Montfort are much abused, it is a bit of my own, and not found in the original documents.

When Montfort came to that part of the tale where Maria had shown herself upon the rock, to save his life at the risk of her own, the Emperor pressed her to his heart, and kissed her repeatedly, saying, "My girl, my girl, you are not unworthy of all he has done for you! and mark, my child! how promptly Heaven rewarded a good act; for in saving your protector from his enemies, you doubtless saved your own life!"

He hardly felt less proud of his daughter's conduct than grateful to Montfort. And often in the story did his feelings burst forth in a similar way; yet it may easily be supposed that neither of them told him all the truth. Neither could tell him the most touching parts of their tale, for fear their feelings for each other should appear. Montfort could not speak of the form that bent before him, to try to shelter him at her own deadly risk, in

the moment of their greatest peril; nor could Maria describe all Montfort's anxiety and watchfulness over her safety: but they told enough to make the father happy indeed.

But although they could not relate every circumstance about each other, there was one on whose affection and good behaviour both could descant without fear—their absent and suffering friend Li; nor did they fail to do so, but, by merely telling the truth, they be-praised him so much, that the Emperor declared they should all set out on the morrow, the instant they had breakfasted, to meet him.

The happy father made several efforts to send Maria and Montfort to their beds, although he said he hardly knew how to part with them for so long; but they both assured him they were not the least sleepy or tired,—which was true, for the state of their minds would not allow them to feel either.

I have already spoken of Montfort's happiness on this evening; but Maria's was still greater, for

at this moment the future, to her, was as nothing. She only thought of the present—that her lover and her father, the two beings on whom all her deepest affections were placed, were with her, and evidently attaching fast each to the other. At length her father said, "If you are not tired, you ought to be; and you must both go to bed immediately."

Maria expressed her fears that she might not be able to sleep in a common bed, and said to Montfort, "If I find that to be the case, you must get me my bed of leaves again to-morrow night. The worst night's rest I had in all our wanderings, was that in which I slept in the shepherd's bed."

To herself, Maria accounted for her want of rest then rather differently—"Because it was the only one in which she did not sleep under Montfort's immediate care and protection."

When Montfort stood up to go away, the father, after he had shaken his hand rather like a ploughman than an Emperor, put Maria's into it, saying, "You have one boon more to grant this



girl—to be as kind a brother and faithful a friend to her under her present circumstances, as you were when you hourly risked your life to prove yourself such; and I am sure you will not find our little Paolo less worthy of it now than then."

Montfort could only say, "Good night! Heaven bless you both!"

The Emperor was not the least surprised at this rather abrupt and unceremonious speech, and Maria was only astonished that he acquitted himself so well: as a reward for which, she returned his shake of the hand still more warmly than she would otherwise have done.

It may be imagined that Montfort went back to his apartment to torment himself again. No such thing: he got into bed immediately. But as he eyed the sumptuous thing prepared for him to repose on, he could not help thinking of a much more homely couch, but one from which the form of her he loved would only have just removed to make way for his own.

CHAPTER IX.

"How goes it now, sir? This news, which is called true, is so like an old tale, that the verity of it is in strong suspicion! has the King found his heir?"

SHAKSPEARE.

THE next morning Montfort, from habit, awoke

publicly announced by the ministers; and it was only from a feeling that a father and daughter meeting under such circumstances should not be broken in upon, that they were then prevented demanding to see their young favourite. From daybreak this morning, however, the crowd had been fast collecting, and now consisted of nearly the whole moveable population of the capital.

But although all knew the Queen had escaped, they had many different ways of telling the story. The version most generally believed was, "That she had been delivered from prison by a favourite dog, which had destroyed nearly a whole detachment of soldiers who attempted to retake her;—that she had been followed by a young officer, who, after tracing her by her particularly small foot-mark for five days and five nights, running all the time, and neither eating, drinking, nor sleeping, had at length discovered her in the utmost distress, and preserved her and her faithful dog from starvation by catching wild goats for them. There was also something about their all living for three

been wounded, but that the man had arrived with the Young Queen: now it was very evident that a dog wounded so badly as to be obliged to be brought on in a litter, could not possibly catch wild goats; therefore it must have been the man who did it. This was such a clear case, that the exploit was unanimously transferred from the former to the latter:—no one disputed it for a moment.

While these matters were going on outside his window, Montfort received a message to say the Queen was already up, and only waited for the Emperor to be dressed for them to show themselves to the people, and that he also was called for. Montfort did not much like the thoughts at first of being led out as a show; but he said to himself, with a smile, in which there was no little self-conceit, "If I will go rescuing princesses and queens, (God bless her!) I must take the consequences of it."

Maria, by a little management, contrived to meet Montfort again without any other person

being present—not that she would have been the least afraid of him after his good conduct last night; but by it their meeting was so much more satisfactory to both parties.

"Well," said she, as they met, "could you sleep before it came to your usual time to give up watching?"

"I must either tell a story or confess that I did," replied Montfort.

"Ah! I could not sleep after it was my time to have taken your place: that shows who will forget first. However, although it was very improper," continued she, smiling, "I will not abuse you for it, as you must have required it; and I should certainly have abused you if you had not done so. But as you slept so well, I do not think you should have been so lazy as to require me to call you."

"You call me!" said Montfort, with a stare.

"Yes, that I did—by deputy. But what a difference all this finery," continued Maria, looking about her, "makes in us! A few days ago we

should neither of us have been surprised if I had done it in person."

"What are you going to do in person now?" asked Montfort.

"Oh!" replied Maria, with a despairing look, "exhibit myself to the people: and so are you, I can tell you; for they call for you louder than they do for me. You are beginning already to pay the penalty for having become a public character. What a pity our poor wounded friend is not here, and then they might see all the Lions at once."

"And what penalty ought you to pay for having become a punster?"

The Emperor entered whilst Maria was speaking, and after kissing her, and giving her a pat on the cheek, said, "My dear, naughty girl, does not what you are so unthankful for, show the people's love for you?"

"And so I take it, my father," replied Maria, "and no one can be more grateful to them for it; but I fear my objection to public exhibition increases, instead of my getting over it."

"Besides," continued the Emperor, not giving an idea to what Maria must have been in the wrong, "you will make Montfort dislike being with us, if you point out to him what is disagreeable to us, instead of what is the reverse."

"No great fear of that," thought Maria, as she looked at herself in a glass, with a little inward smile, "as he has taste enough himself to find out what is the reverse."

The shouts and clamour of the crowd, when the Emperor led Maria and Montfort forward into the balcony, were deafening. Montfort thought it a great hardship to be forced to stand bowing to them so long; but he was amply repaid by the blessings

shall I attempt to pourtray that pomp which, however well got up, although it may impose upon me for the moment, seldom fails to make me laugh in the end; for I never can long divest myself of the idea, that it is show only a little way removed from the tinselled hat, tarnished lace, and red stockings of the hedge theatre. Besides, with like people, I cannot bear to see them act a part, however necessary it may be, and therefore I have un-queened my sweet Maria as much as possible—as much even as she could have desired—have taken her away from that art which was no part of her, and have given her back to her own beloved nature: and I can tell her father that he had better look to his imperial crown, for if he continues to behave as well as he has done, and I to like him as much, he will soon be no Emperor with me.

But notwithstanding their tastes for simplicity were similar to my own, (which is most refined,) it was remarked that the members of this family were, either by design or accident, sur-

[illegible] by those whose very souls seemed to live in ceremony; I do not allude to ministers, nor any of the "working classes" of the state, for they, of course, were chosen for other things,—but those who merely occupied places connected with show.

Maria had observed this to her father, who told her it was intended by him to counterbalance their own want of form that he had such formal persons about them. Poor people! they often found it a hard matter to keep the father and daughter within any sort of bounds upon state-occasions, and were sometimes quite scandalized at their behaviour. They would then console themselves by saying to each other, "Extremely





vandyked lace collar which her ancestors had always worn before her; and to her not using powder and rouge.

I think if Montfort had heard these last two propositions made, he would have annihilated the antiquated piece of nobility with a look. "What! to plaster and grease the beautiful hair which he had touched with as much love and awe as a votary does some saintly shrine? one lock of which was cradled in his bosom, only to be given up with the life's-blood of the heart that beat beneath it? To daub over the roses of the cheek he had gazed upon, until he thought the sunset hues an unmeaning blank?" I really would not have answered for the old lady's life! A thunderbolt is, to be sure, an awful thing, but nothing to the look that would have been launched at her. Why, the father, even, was exceedingly wroth when the atrocity was proposed to him, although I believe an earthquake was threatened as the consequence of his refusal. What then would the lover have been?

This subject had in truth been discussed with much seriousness; the sticklers for it declaring it involved the safety of the state, and those against it (most of them the young) maintaining that the state had better run all hazards than that the loveliest of God's created works should be so disfigured. Maria herself was the only person who laughed upon the subject, all the others thinking it much too grave for such levity. She said to her father, "Oh, do let me wear it! I should be such a funny figure!" This, however, was before she was in love. She would not like to have worn it now, except, perhaps, for a few minutes, just to make Montfort laugh.

The reader having had all this time to imagine the scene that was going on—all the bowings and smiles of the great, and all the shoutings and blessings of the little, I proceed to say, that the moment breakfast was over, the party went to meet Maria's second champion—which meeting, to the great joy of all those concerned, took place about thirty miles from V——. Li was awake;



and it is out of my power, much as I have been accustomed to live in the very best dog society—in fact, the first circles—to picture his dumb delight at seeing them.

"Oh, my own, own Li!" said Maria, "did you think your friends had deserted you? Never, never again whilst we live, shall we be separated so long if I can help it."

To Montfort's caresses Li answered nearly as kindly as to Maria's; but when the Emperor hugged him and said, "Oh, Li, how shall I ever make you understand, that to you, too, do I owe the life of my child?" he looked at him as if he thought it rather familiar, although he did not say any thing.

The dog was so much recovered that they brought him back in the carriage with them, Maria, as usual, sitting with his head in her lap: at which Li looked as if all he had undergone for her was overpaid—and at which Montfort might have been envious, but that he recollected his own wounds in her defence had been rewarded by





extraordinary in this, for he instantly said, in the utmost alarm, "Maria, did they bite you?"

"No! indeed, they did not!" replied Maria, very earnestly, to relieve her father's fears. "One of them tore my trousers a little—but that was all."

"Are you certain there was no mark of a tooth?"

"I am quite sure!" returned Maria; and full as quickly Montfort blundered out—

"Upon my honour, there was not the slightest mark!"—when Maria's face went deeper than ever into Li's long coat, and she said to herself, quite in a rage, "What an abominable goose he is! How I should like to pull his ears!"

But the Emperor was too deeply concerned to take notice of any thing extraordinary in his speech.

The remainder of this day was, if possible, still more happy than the last—but their happiness was of too solemn a cast for me to wish to describe it, for they had not yet recovered their wonted spirits. I have been too sad and sentimental

myself of late to like any thing of a sombre hue at this moment. I therefore skip to the second evening from that I am now speaking of; when Maria showed more of that *art* of which her poor silly lover thought her incapable.

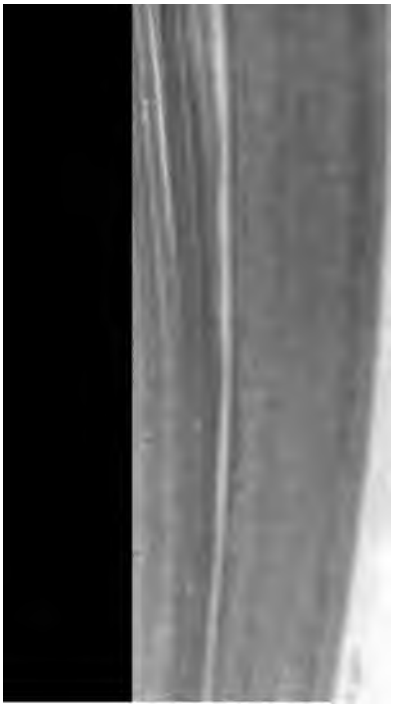
The Emperor had said something which Maria did not plainly hear, but which she saw somewhat confused and embarrassed Montfort. This another person might not perhaps have observed, but she had studied his face—alas! for her, poor girl! —far too deeply not to detect it; and, as "conscience doth make cowards of us all," her conscience took fright lest it should be something which might make Montfort betray himself. She therefore, to divert attention, instantly said, "I certainly have been more praised in the last three days than ever was heroine since the time of Joan of Arc at least; but, nevertheless, I am dissatisfied, and have good cause to be so, for my brightest exploit has not even been mentioned by the only person who could have mentioned it, and of course my modesty stood in the way of my doing

it myself. But it is quite shocking to think, that envy of another's fame is not always confined to the mean breast, but that even those who have themselves done great actions are capable of feeling it—as it is said Fabius Maximus envied Scipio."

Montfort himself was at first puzzled to know what Maria meant, but by degrees his face assumed an expression which showed he was aware he should be well laughed at, and have to join in the laugh against himself too.

"Well, Maria," said her father, "you seem to have such a proper sense of your own merits in the affair, that I do not think your modesty will stand much in the way of your relating it—so suppose you give it to us."

"Oh! I am quite ready to tell it; for I perceive that one may have too much modesty for such an envious world as this; but I fear that a certain person may not like to hear the subject mentioned, as he must purposely have avoided it: indeed, I can easily conceive that a hero would not like to acknowledge he had been obliged to seek protec-



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ought she, "Montfort will know that I nly merry upon an occasion, as he has

tion from a heroine, who, of her own proper might, defeated the dreadful enemy which he had run away from."

Montfort said, with an air of resignation, "I may as well consent, with a good grace, to this tale being told, for I see it is determined that my character shall be ruined."

Maria then related the scene of the spider and the hollow tree with great glee and humour, getting up and skipping about to show her companion's antics; for, although she had introduced her story from a different motive, yet, when once she had begun it, her spirits made her enjoy it heartily.

The Emperor, although he felt as if he hardly ought to laugh yet, could not help doing so at her tricks; and said, "Oh, Montfort! you have not only brought me back my girl, but you have brought her back unaltered—as light-hearted and laughing as ever! but why, in all the time she has been with you, have you not taught the mad-cap to behave better than to quiz her elder brother?"

Montfort replied, "That he had tried, but on some persons the best example, as well as precept, was thrown away."

Maria would like to have said, "How can you tell such an abominable story, when you know that you not only encouraged every whim of mine, but would have walked twenty miles to have gratified the very idlest of them, and have thought your trouble well repaid, if, at the end of it, I should have enjoyed one good laugh, even though it was at yourself?" She could not very well say all this in a look, but she said as plain as she could, "Oh, you story-teller!"

But whatever Maria might like to have said, she never felt more obliged to her father for any one speech that he had ever before made to her. "Now," thought she, "Montfort will know that I am not only merry upon an occasion, as he has already often seen me, but that it is my habit so to be—that I am quite the reverse of what I must lately have appeared to him."

And many other days flew by on wings as bright

and beautiful, but alas! as flitting, as those of the unresting bird of Paradise. Montfort grew hourly in the Emperor's esteem and affection; in his daughter's, he could not; neither could she in his, for the vials of their love were full. If he saw her in a new situation,—that of a dutiful and loving child—and saw her in it every thing he could have wished—it did not in the least raise his opinion of her, for such he knew she would be; but it did somewhat raise his opinion of himself, for whenever Maria, by word or deed, or even look, did any thing by which his approbation of her conduct should have been excited, he merely approved of his own sagacity, and said to himself in an applauding manner, "There! I knew this would be the case; I knew I could not be mistaken in her!"

However, he might have acknowledged, without doing any wrong to the sagacity he was so proud of, that the sort of duty Maria showed her father was more akin to his own way of thinking than he even had expected: it was not a formal, cold obedience to commands, for when any such were ventured to



be given, they were not unfrequently disobeyed, himself abused for thinking of them, and perhaps his ears pulled into the bargain; but there was an anxious seeking after his real wishes, and an evident finding of her own happiness in causing his, which Montfort thought to be infinitely better than the most correct—if merely correct—conduct in the world: it had the same superiority as the entering into the very spirit of a law has over the simply attending to the words in which it is expressed.

One evening, after Maria had been amusing by her whims and fancies, both of those who loved her, as much as she had delighted one of them by showing the feeling I have attempted to describe above, Montfort sat by the fire of his own sitting-room, when they had retired to their apartments for the night. He continued in silence for some time, and might have been thought, by his intense look, to be trying to discover figures in the fire; but he at length said, as if he had just made the discovery, "I can think

of nothing but her—I can feel nothing but her: joy and sorrow seem of her giving; if the former meets my sight, it is Maria who lifts the veil from what was before hidden; or if gloomy apprehensions are put to flight, it is Maria who stands before me and scatters them with her smiles: sorrow I only know when she is not present. I can see nothing in life but her. All else that a bountiful Creator has made, is a blank to me, and does not take hold of my feelings in any way. To me she is the whole world, and every thing that is in it: I love her too, too much—more than one creature should love another!"

It would have been very difficult to have persuaded Maria of this. She did not think his love one bit too much, and she was convinced she paid in kind most equitably for every atom of it. Her thoughts on the subject were, "I know he is a fool to love me so, but he only gives me back what I give him; and to receive less from him would break my heart."

But it must not be supposed because their

feelings were thus extravagant towards each other, that they had equally wild ideas of the happiness they would enjoy in that life which their thoughts naturally always dwelt on, if any impossible fate should bring them together: no, they were not so much the fools of their present feelings as this comes to; indeed, those very feelings made against their being so. The storm they were now tossed in, caused them to long for quiet—for peace, and a "sweet trust." They did not heap up for themselves disappointment, by imagining impossible felicity; nay, their very wishes reached not beyond a humble bound — to go, supporting and supported, along a path, which they did not forget, that all who had passed it called a rugged one—with no greater share of happiness than falls to the lot of many, was its utmost extent.

But Montfort's mind had not so far lost its proper tone as to be wholly given up, even for the few hours he sat musing by his fire, to that which I have allowed to tyrannize over mine for all the years that

I have passed—speculating in fancy on what might be, instead of looking at what 'is.' He was not contented to feed on that which, perhaps sweet to the present taste, often turns to wormwood. No! he thought of his present, real situation; and made his mind grapple with it, however loth to do so; and formed a manly resolution in consequence — but what it was I shall not tell my reader until he chooses to do so himself.

The following morning, Montfort sought an opportunity of being alone with Maria; which she, perhaps, saw, and perhaps thought it would be a pity to thwart—for they soon were alone.

Montfort, as we do on such occasions, talked on every subject the most distantly removed from that on which he was most anxious to speak, until Maria began to think he need not have been so intent on their being alone, before he informed her that the weather was a little warmer to-day than it had been yesterday.

At length the secret came out. Maria happened to mention the word 'soldier.'—Montfort caught

at the expression, although not in a very à-propos manner, and said, "Do you think I am fond of my profession?"

"How can you ask such nonsense, when you are aware I know you think no other in the world can be compared to it — that its members possess all that is great, and nothing that is little in our nature?"

But even Maria's smile did not produce its usual effect; and he said, with an unmoved countenance, "And you think I am right to have such an idea, I am sure!"

"Why, you know I never find fault with any one for being in earnest!"

"Then the most kind of little brothers," said Montfort, with a ghastly attempt at a smile, "will not think it strange, if, under existing circumstances, I ask leave to join my regiment."

To poor Maria it seemed as if all the functions of her body had ceased at once;—her heart sank; her blood curdled; her lips quivered. A sickness came over her, and she felt she was sinking from

her chair. At this instant she heard a footstep approaching in the gallery. The blood rushed back to her face: she instantly got up, said to Montfort, "Wait here, until I come again," and left the apartment.

Montfort had not, however, seen all this, for, as usual on such occasions, he looked any where but at her.

In the bitterness of the moment, when first she was alone, Maria felt something like indignation that Montfort should have led her to indirectly approve of his determination, before he mentioned it; but she quickly acknowledged that it must have been unpremeditated on his part, and then she wept, even in the first burst of her own sorrow, for the injustice she had done him. "Oh, who shall judge another kindly if I—if one overwhelmed with obligations, and who loves as I do—act thus cruelly?"

From its effect upon her, it might have been thought that Maria had never contemplated this separation: but such was not the fact. She

walked hastily up and down the room once or twice. "I said I was prepared for this, for I knew it would come: but how do I show it? Yet I believe I was as much prepared as I ever should have been. But I will prove to him I am not unworthy of the love of the noblest-minded being upon this earth. However much my heart may rebel, I will never ask him not to do what he thinks his honour calls upon him to do—No! not if I die for it. There, I am prepared—as much as I can be."

The instant the intruder was gone, she came forward to him, and said, "Will you make me one promise?"

"I will if——"

"If what?"

"If my honour——"

"Can you think I would ask you to do any thing against your honour?—I, who do not even ask you to stay?"

"Oh, no! but——"

"But what?"

"I do not know! say on what I am to do—for it cannot be wrong if you ask it."

"I do feel worthy of that speech. You have saved my life: it is the least thing you have done for me. One who is so generous must himself be grateful; therefore, you will understand my feelings. I call you my brother; and my father calls you his son. These are no mere words; they have a meaning. Will you promise me, therefore, always to think that our happiness is as much involved in your fate as if you were truly the son of that father—and of that mother, whom, alas! I shall know for the first time when I meet

makes against your honour; but, short of that, I ask you to bear in mind whose fates hang upon your's."

"Dear, dear——" said Montfort, and stopped.

"Why not Maria?" added she.

"Dearest Maria! then, I do promise this! but it does not mean that where my conscience tells me it is right to hazard those under me, I should not lead the way myself."

"I never will ask you to act unworthy of yourself."

"You are a noble-minded girl!"

"Do not call me so! I do not think it is a term to apply to a woman—neither do I wish for it—much less deserve it; for when I seem to act a nobler part than common, it is done with fear and trembling, and a truly coward heart."

Montfort was about to reply, when Maria was again started with a noise in the corridor, but they quickly recognised what it was.

Our friend Li had now got well enough to walk

about; and where he chose to walk, there he might walk; for who shall dare to say "Nay" to a dog in power? and he was at present hobbling about in search of Maria.

When he came in and found both his fellow-fugitives together, he was doubly delighted; but his delight was not shared by Maria, for she naturally thought, "if he would ever again have the same cause for gladness."

Nor was this the last trial her feelings were exposed to by her unconscious favourite; for when she was leaving the room—not daring to trust herself to speak more at present—he evidently wanted Montfort to go with her, and thought it strange that he did not do so as usual, for he limped from one to the other; and, when he was following Maria, looked back in Montfort's face and whined, not wishing them to part. There was something in his moan, too, hollow and unearthly, as if he had seen a ghost, that might well be allowed to have an effect on Maria's already overstrained nerves. When she got to her room, she

said, "Oh, Li! Li! we have a worse parting than this to look forward to; and, then, there is only one who can tell if ever we shall meet again!"

Montfort immediately mentioned the subject to the Emperor, who said, "I, as a man, can enter into your feelings, but you will find it harder to make Maria understand them. However, I even must confess that although I have promoted you into Maria's own regiment, I would not allow it to be mentioned to you, for fear it should have put this idea into your head, which I did not wish should be the case; because I am sure there will be no service which it would be of advantage for a young soldier to see, and therefore we shall be separated to no purpose. Nevertheless, I must not allow myself to object to your doing as you wish: and with respect to your advancement, civil and military, you know that our power is yours; but as Maria of course claims to be your most intimate friend, I must make her consult you on this subject.—One thing, however, you must

never think—that we can ever entertain the idea of its being in our power to recompense you for what you have done for us. Oh, Montfort, if I gave you my throne, it would only show my inclination, but not my ability, to repay you for restoring an only child."

Bitter to their feelings, and made bitterer still by their concealment, was their parting: but why should I dwell upon it, when it is light indeed compared to that which is behind? Sorrows approach that will not be denied, and then I must speak out, and tell my tale of woe; but, whilst I can do so, I will pass lightly over that which doth offend me. How very pleasant, if in the story of real life, one could do the same!

Pass we, then, all the hideous fancies Maria conjured up at the thoughts of the danger her lover was again to meet; pass we, too, that lover's fancy, of every thing hideous being concentrated in one thought—parting from Maria. On the third evening from that on which he had first ventured to mention the subject, Montfort had

joined the army; where we will leave him for a time.

This separation drew those left behind still closer together. The father and daughter could not bear to be apart; but when of necessity they were so, Maria sat hour after hour in her own apartments, with her arms about Li's neck, and her soul far, far away. Her feelings seized upon him, because he had been so much with her when Montfort was present. She therefore seemed to fancy him a link between them, and never willingly let him out of her sight.

But her greatest consolation was to see the progress Montfort had made in her father's regards. He seemed never to be out of his thoughts; and she had only to induce him to speak at all, to make him speak on the sole subject she could bear to hear; and which she was thus fortunately freed from ever herself being forced to introduce.

Maria's most sad and pensive moments were those she was obliged to pass in society. She

then fled away to the world of memory and fancy for refuge. Her soul did not live in the gay throng around her. Instead of courtly sights and sounds, she saw the hazel-boughs waving above her head, and heard the breeze whisper through the leaves and mingle with a sound still sweeter to her ear—her lover's breathing, as he slept beside her, and beneath her care. From the splendour around her she would turn away with a disgust which it was hard to conceal, and lean against a window, looking out upon the green trees for consolation. Every leaf, every flower, put her in mind of something they had seen together; and when the hollow gale swept by with its *spirit-y* sound, did she love to think of the rough blast of Heaven, and of the driving rain or snow; for then rose to her sight the form she loved, sheltering her from the beating storm, utterly regardless of how he exposed himself to its fury.

At such an unfortunate moment was Maria once awoken from her dream by an unhappy page, who

was sent to tell her of something that had to do with form. Although the boy was one of the prettiest little fellows that ever was seen, and Maria quite a Grizzel for patience, she looked very hard at a large lamp that stood near her.

Far be it from me to insinuate that she felt tempted to do any thing so unqueenlike as to throw it at the head of him who called her back so pitilessly to sad reality: I only state the fact, that she looked very hard at it.

However, she soon replied, in her kindliest tone, "Well, say I shall be ready immediately;" but, nevertheless, she did mutter to herself, "I wonder people call him pretty; in my opinion he is a very ugly boy."

Should Maria suffer for her pettishness with those whose souls can never rise above this wretched earth, let them try to think that—

> "The old woman toss'd up in a blanket
> Seventy times as high as the moon,"

had not half so great a fall as the hapless wight,

who, having been soaring in the clear bright sky of fancy and romance, plumps suddenly down to the dull cold world of reality. "The world was all one lump," does Lord Byron venture to say; and what a very cold hard lump it seems at such a moment! No! The change was nothing so great to him, who, one moment, found himself hovering with his waxen wings a thought too near the sun, and the next popped down into the Ægean.



CHAPTER X.

"What, pale again?
My fear hath catch'd your fondness: now I see
The mystery of your loneliness, and find
Your salt tears' head."

SHAKSPEARE.

AFTER Montfort had been gone for some time, the Emperor one evening entered Maria's apartments, where she was alone, and found her in her usual attitude, with her arms about Li's neck, and so lost in thought that she did not at first perceive him; but she was at that moment thinking of him, and saying to herself, "And my poor father knew not that he risked his daughter's life once more in permitting Montfort again to seek

[redacted]

[redacted] anger. But should he have been in this ignorance? How do I merit him?" Her eyes fell to the ground, and she remained some time in silent thought. At length, she continued to herself, "Not as his daughter ought, I fear! Yet I know not how to act. Can I tell him I am loved by one who has never dared to declare his love to me? And, if I tell him that my every thought is centred up in one who never can be mine, will it not render him miserable to no purpose?"

While Miriam's mind was thus employed, the Emperor sprang, which made her start—

"Like a guilty thing upon a fearful summons."

[redacted]



"Oh!" said Maria, hastily and without thought, anxious to speak on any subject in order to cover her little confusion—"no, indeed! When our dangers were over, I was always in good spirits."

"Were you? And what made you so?"

Maria looked more silly than ever; but, after a time, said, "Oh! you know it is natural to be happy after escaping great danger,—and—and—and every step brought me nearer to my own dear father."

"Where you show your happiness by being the most dismal little thing in the world. You have accounted very philosophically for your spirits then, but that does not explain your sadness now." Here the Emperor paused, and it seemed that some idea, which might have wandered in his mind before, had come back to it with additional force whilst he was making this speech; for he continued in a much more serious tone—"Tell me, Maria! had not your young guide more to do with your spirits than I am aware of?"

Poor Maria turned deadly pale, but did not

answer a word. Her father looked at her with that in his countenance which, as she cast a hurried glance at his face, went to her very heart; and his simple but expressive appeal to her feelings of "My child!" completed her distress. She felt that she could, on the instant, have laid down her life to give him back that peace of mind which he now must needs discover was lost to him for ever; but to answer him one word, was beyond her power.

When this silence, which was too much for either to bear long, had lasted for a moment, her father said solemnly, "Maria, what am I to think!" Still receiving no answer, he added, "You must use no deceit with me: your sainted mother never did!"

Maria felt a choking in her throat, but she shed no tears; but that which passed over her countenance spoke of far more painful feelings than tears would have done. Her father, even in the midst of the anxiety and distress which had now taken possession of him, felt for her, and said

soothingly, "Answer me, my daughter, and I know if you do answer, it will be truly."

"Father!" said Maria, at length bursting into tears, "do not be cruel to your own child!"

"And do not you, my child, be cruel to your father! End this dreadful suspense."

Maria sobbed out, "Now, indeed, I feel a mother's loss."

"Thy father will not be less kind to thee, girl!"

"Oh, I did not mean that!—indeed, I did not! But I could tell a mother ——"

"What you dare not tell a father!"

"Father! your daughter has nothing that she dare not tell!"

"Then, why keep me in torture?"

"This is a cruel situation. God knows I would not willingly have done any thing to make you unhappy—but our feelings—can we always command them?"

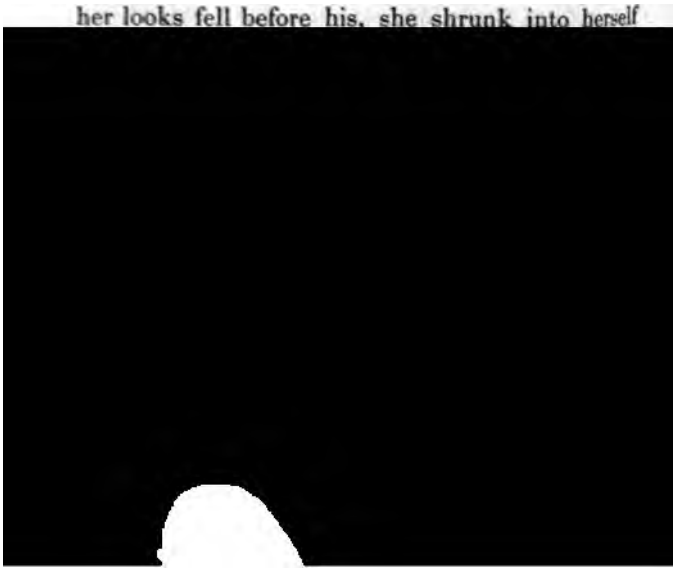
"But," said her father, much moved, and kissing her, "I must know what those feelings are. Tell me, my child! and end my agony."



as it was now decided, "I think I tell you truth when I say I feel less miserable on my own account than on yours: but, oh, my father! do not let your love for your unhappy child hurry you into injustice and ingratitude! You have nothing to reproach my preserver with—nothing! whatever blame exists must fall on me alone. I know that I am unworthy of him—unworthy of the noblest-minded being that ever lived; but can you not find some excuse for me, without blame to one who deserves no such return from us? Can you not think, that if I have given my love unwisely, I have not given it unworthily? Can you not call to mind all I was exposed to—daily and hourly with him to whom I owed release from bonds and death, and more than a brother's love and kindness—on whom, and on whom alone I had to lean for support in so many perils! Father, I do not ask you to judge me more favourably than I judge myself, and I do not acquit myself altogether; but I do ask you not to be unjust—I do entreat you not to let one feel-

ing enter your noble heart of which you will full surely repent. For me, I blame myself, not because I gave my love to one unworthy of it, but because I gave away your happiness as well as my own—if that can be called giving, which I could not possibly withhold."

Whilst Maria was speaking, her timidity seemed lost in the enthusiasm with which she defended her lover; and there was something in her tone that her father could not interrupt, although he longed to repeat a question to which, by him, a world of interest was attached; but when she ceased to speak, the glow of her spirit was gone: her looks fell before his, she shrunk into herself



"You will despise me if you make me confess all my weakness: but I will do so, for perhaps it is my punishment; and it is justice to him and to you. My love for Montfort made me observe him too narrowly for his real feelings to escape me. At first he treated me with all the openness of a mere friend but as he became more circumspect and guarded in his conduct, I knew full well from what cause it proceeded; and the more he tried to conceal his secret from me, the more plainly did I perceive it. There were moments, too, when I was in danger, in which he could not command himself as usual, although he thought he was unobserved."

"Then I am clearly to understand that he never tried to win your heart."

"I do not know how to answer you, father. He could not help showing me that he thought nothing of his own life in comparison with mine; or even with my comfort, if I would have allowed it. He could not help hourly showing me, that no other thought occupied his mind

except my safety and welfare. But this I have told you of before. He could not help his nobleness! and that surely wins most upon my heart."

"Maria, I do not mean this. But did he never try to win your affections by speaking of love to you, or telling you, or hinting to you, of his own?"

"Never! He never seemed to say any thing tending to it except what I will explain to you as truly as I am at this moment able to do."

Maria then, as nearly as her agitation would permit, mentioned all that Montfort had ever said

efore no such judge now, even had every thing been laid as bare before him as Maria persuaded herself was the case. She at length found courage to mention her own promise to Montfort on the last day of their being alone, and how she had stopped him from saying she knew not what, but what she feared they both might afterwards condemn: then her confession was complete, and she felt that she was awaiting her doom.

It was not the vulgar fear of punishment, or loss, that hung upon Maria; but a far worse fear to such a mind as her's—that she might at once forfeit the esteem which it had been the object of her whole life to attain—that he whose approbation had always stood with her next to that of her own conscience and of her God, might condemn her conduct. Had her father thought her guilty, but forgiven her, his forgiveness would have been but little valued, because it was his good opinion she prized so much, that all else he could give or take away was as nothing compared to it.

Her suspense lasted but for one moment—in the next she was folded in her father's arms; nor was it necessary for him to tell in words what his feelings were towards her. "Father!" said she, as soon as she could speak,—"have I deserved this goodness? I fear not! I fear not!"

"Yes, my child! thou art thy mother in every thing, and I never doubted it; and my girl must forgive me if I have for a moment been unjust to that dear and noble deliverer, to whom, under Heaven, I owe her life. But, Maria, are you sure that you cannot have mistaken his feelings towards you?"

"I fear," replied she, "I cannot have been so candid with you as I intended to be; for, if I had, I cannot see how you could for an instant doubt that of which I am so certain."

But her unreasonable father, who did not forget that those in love seldom require the most satisfactory proofs of what they so much wish to be true, seemed hardly yet convinced, and added, "Is

it not possible your own heart may in some measure have deceived you?"

"Father!" said Maria, turning away her face covered with blushes, "I *know* that he loves me."

When Maria had again somewhat recovered her composure, her father said, "I am not unreasonable; I do not expect impossibilities. Had Montfort, loving you as you think he does, ('Now,' thought Maria, 'he gets quite disagreeable! I never knew him so hard to be convinced before; and on such a plain subject too!') taken advantage of your situation to try to win your heart, it would have been dishonourable. But as he did endeavour, however imperfectly, to command and conceal his passion, it is all I could have expected. I may be forgiven a father's pride, too, if I say, that I well know to what he was exposed in always having my girl with him, and in seeing her in situations calculated to show him her inmost soul."

"And cannot my father think of what I was exposed to?" repeated Maria, amidst her now comparatively happy tears.

"I can, Maria; I can think that you had always before you one who is worthy of you—yes, much as I value you, I say, quite worthy of you:—I say more, the only person I ever knew who is so—at least, so am I fool enough to believe. I can think, that you saw him hourly doing that for you which might—and, perhaps, should—have won your regards to a far different person."

Here Maria looked up no less astonished than delighted, for her father not only seemed to have stolen her own sentiments, but also her own enthusiasm in expressing them. He had not however finished yet, for she too was to come in for her share of his praise; and he continued: "But ought I not to be thankful that I have a child in whom I can put implicit confidence, even when she is telling a tale in which she herself is so much interested?"

From any except a parent this speech would have been but little flattering, as it merely amounted to saying he did not think her bad enough to tell untruths; but this is not the feeling

when such a speech is made by a father or mother. Earthly parents, if I may with reverence say so, seem clothed with a portion of the dignity and authority of the heavenly: so that approbation from them for performing the duty we are least likely to offend in, is received with thankfulness, when it would appear the reverse of praise from an indifferent person. Maria, therefore, took this humble commendation with as much gratitude as if her father had made her out to be possessed of every virtue, and said, "All I love conspire to spoil me—to make me very vain. And you do so when I am hardly reconciled to myself for my behaviour towards you."

"But my girl must be reconciled to herself!"

And here followed a long defence for her of her conduct towards her father, (the sole thing she could fancy there was the least necessity for defending, in loving such as Montfort,) made by the only person who had a right to be her accuser. This attained its object much sooner than all her own reasoning would have done, although that would

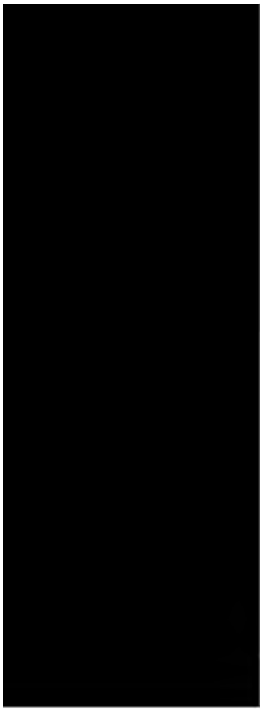
have succeeded before long, for she was not in reality nearly so much displeased with herself, as she at the moment fancied she was; but her mind had got a tendency, for a time, to condemn itself, from her father having taken the part he did, his generous confidence seeming to be set in opposition to the want of it which she thought she had shown, and making it appear worse.

Besides, Maria was both criminal and judge; which I always look upon as an advantage, however impartial we may fancy ourselves.

This was perhaps the very happiest hour that Maria had ever yet passed. It would have had a rival—nay, a far superior still—had the first knowledge of Montfort's love burst upon her as suddenly as had now her father's approbation of it; but that light of her existence had come on by degrees—first, a rosy dawn; and then, one blessed beam after another; whilst, here, the whole flood had rushed in at once. Her father, at length, knew all she had so much longed to tell him; and, since knowing it, had

given her his greatest praise—had told her she was like her mother!—praise, which in her earlier, and—no, not happier days!—used to be a rich reward for a great deal of good behaviour. Whatever, then, might be her fate, her father did not condemn her; and her heart at that moment seemed to tell her that she could almost be happy in his approbation of her passion, and her lover's deep return of it, although that passion should be no further gratified.

Some such speculations as those of Maria seemed to have been passing in her father's mind, but with a different result; for he said, sorrowfully, "Maria, my unfortunate daughter! I have long been tired of my high station; and it is only that it never before called upon me to sacrifice my feelings, that has made me endure it thus far. But now! oh, how I hate it! In any other situation, the first wish of my heart would have been to have gratified the wishes of those I love best in the world; but now, what can I say? Nothing! Yes, this I can and will say—that no earthly con-



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sideration shall ever make me ask my child to break the promise she has rashly, perhaps, but honestly made; the full meaning of which I perfectly understand."

"Bless you! bless you, my father!—and I will never ask you to do more!" said Maria, hanging about his neck; "and should such be our fate, to be for ever separated—which, alas! it must be—I will not think that I have no blessings left, whilst I have your approbation, and his love, but, will pray to God to grant me life and strength to make my parent happy; for what other father in the world, in your situation, would have acted by his daughter as you have done by me?"

means in her power to cheer his spirits, for every moment's thought painted to him the situation of his beloved child in yet darker colours. He reflected on her warm heart and affectionate disposition, so calculated to give and receive happiness; and then he saw her, in the bloom of youth, cut off from that greatest of earthly blessings—the enjoyment of an innocent love,—cut off from that which had formed the only happiness he had ever known, until he learnt to be happy in the happiness of her whose fate now caused his misery.

In the course of their conversation all the "not unsought be won" feelings of the woman were roused in Maria, by her father saying, "That he supposed she would wish Montfort to know what had now passed between them, as it would, at least, give him as much satisfaction as it had given her."

"But, father," said she, in a fright at the idea of it, "he has never told me that he loves me!"

"But if you do not doubt his love?"

"Doubt—oh! I as little doubt his love, as I

doubt his honour!—but I would not for the world have him think I had been indelicate, in owning to a father what he has never yet asked me to own to him."

"Do you think it possible, Maria, that he could condemn your conduct, when even your father approves of it?"

"I do!" said Maria, with decision—"I think a—that is—that he might fastidiously condemn what even a father approves."

"Maria, this speech alone would prove to me that you love; for love has made you learned in love. A year ago you would not have understood this—but, nevertheless, I admit it is true. I admit



her father's mind; but on that she was obliged to receive comfort. Now that the fear of her father's disapprobation was over, another terrible one came back to her with renewed violence—that for Montfort's safety. Her father said all he could think of to convince her he was in no danger; but he saw that he had not succeeded—nor, indeed, much as he was interested in his fate before, did he feel half so confident himself about that safety now he found his only child's happiness so absolutely depended upon it. He said, "Count Dornberg shall send him back with dispatches, for, I am sure, there will nothing take place that it will be of advantage for him to see." Maria looked dismayed at the idea of such "advantages," but the next moment thought—"Oh! if he comes, my father will tell him all! But what a thankless wretch am I, that nothing can please me! should any earthly thing be put in comparison with his safety? They—(they from henceforth and for ever, with Maria, will mean, her father and her lover)—they praise me; but I fear it is because they do not know me as well as I know myself."

Who that has ever loved does not know the delight of talking of love. Maria was now as anxious to tell her father as he was to hear all the instances of Montfort's passion for her, which she had seen in spite of his attempt at concealment.

She sat beside him, leaning on his shoulder, so that he could not see her face, and related nearly all their history over again; and it is surprising what a different tale it seemed, when told to give a different impression. She did not forget to dwell upon the lock of her hair which she had seen in his bosom, though she could not describe half of the sweet sensations it had caused in her own.

"And now, my father," said she, as she concluded, "you have not even asked me my motive for concealing this from you so long, but you would not be able to judge fairly of my conduct unless I were to tell you. In addition to the reluctance a woman must have to speak of her love for one who has never actually declared himself her lover, I felt that, situated as we, alas! are, the knowledge of the circumstance could only make you unhappy.

Had it been in your power to dispose of me as you thought proper, I could not have reconciled it to my conscience not to have told you all; but, under our circumstances, concealment seemed my duty:—perhaps I mistook it, but it has surely been the most painful duty I have ever attempted to fulfil; and the more painful, because I always doubted if I were right."

Soon after this they parted, and when they were bidding 'good night,' Maria said, "Now I feel like your daughter again—now that I have not one thought concealed from you."

"God bless you, my child! Whatever may happen, your happiness is my happiness; and I can know no other."

The second evening after this explanation had taken place, Montfort had just returned from a ride with a young light-hearted brother-officer, to whom he had taken a particular fancy, he hardly knew why—his hair, to be sure, was nearly the same colour as Maria's. His new friend had got a new horse, and then

rode him for the first time; which Montfort was very glad of, as it occupied his attention so much, that he was left as completely to his own thoughts as if he had been quite alone: and his thoughts arranged themselves into something like the following order:—

"Her father was right. There will be nothing done here worth seeing. The rascals won't fight. But it was a good excuse for leaving her—and some such excuse I must always find when I do leave her, for I must never let the warm-hearted girl see that I avoid her—that would break her heart. But am I glad that I found such excuse? 'Tis useless uttering lies to myself! Oh! what misery would it not save me, if every hour I am not with her—or, at least, do not know myself to be near her—were blotted out of my existence!"

Montfort had just got off his horse, and stood at the door of his tent a moment, ostensibly to listen to the thousand-and-one directions which his friend gave to a perplexed groom about the new horse; but, really, to take one look at that

sun, just now dipping below the horizon, which, that day month, he recollected he had gazed at, at the same instant, from the door of their hut, in other company than what was now around him. His musing was broken by an orderly, who rode up to say, "The Commander-in-Chief wanted him immediately."

Montfort was not a little surprised when Count Dornberg told him dispatches would be ready for him in half-an-hour, to take to the capital. He, however, made his most soldier-like bow; but the colour which came into his face at the thoughts of seeing Maria again so soon, the rough Count rather mistook. "What? you don't like the employment?" said he. "Well, I can easily fancy, at your age, your preferring the camp to the court. But I must send you, for there are some things which I want you to explain to the Emperor, and which you can better do personally than I can by writing: besides, you need not be afraid!—there will be nothing done in your absence, as far as I can guess."

When Montfort had received his instructions, and was taking his leave, the Count said, "I hate courts myself! but, nevertheless, I love the Emperor and Queen, and you will like them too when you have known them as long as I have; but I am glad to see there is no chance of your being spoilt, for you are fit for something better than a courtier."

Montfort replied, "That he was certainly rather inclined to like what he had seen of their Majesties, but that he did detest a court."

The Count took both parts of this speech to be equally sincere, and was so pleased at their sentiments agreeing, that in order to reconcile him somewhat to being borne as fast as horses could carry him towards the being he loved so devotedly, he said, "I will lend you a carriage of mine. You will find it more comfortable than a hired one; but you must send it back to me if the Emperor should detain you."

All this rapid journey, Montfort was laying down most proper rules for his behaviour—"No!

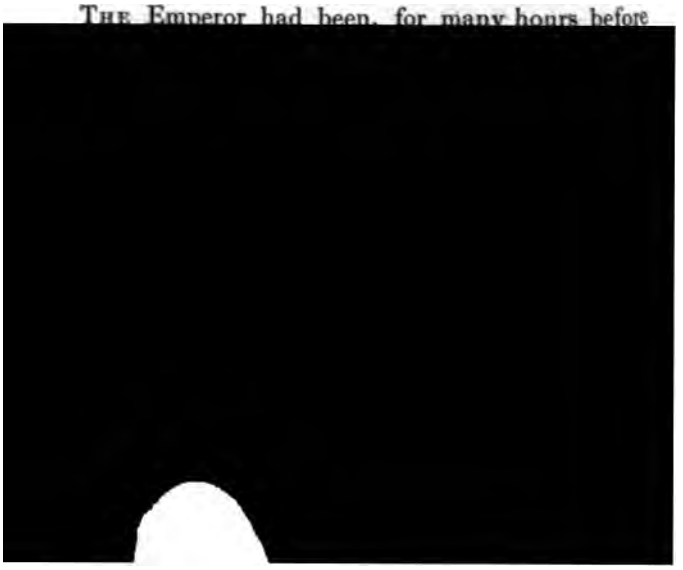
I may have erred," said he, "where I was taken by surprise, and had not power to think; but I have no fears of myself now I have plenty of time for reflection. I solemnly vow I will not squeeze that treasured hand, which will soon be placed in mine, however winning she may look, one bit harder than a common acquaintance would do; that is, I must be a little warmer, or the sweet angel would think me unkind: but I will not be too much so, most positively. Then, as to her dear father, I am determined he shall never find out from me any thing that would give his noble heart one moment's pain."

CHAPTER XI.

"But, either it was different in blood."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Emperor had been, for many hours before



tracted his mind so much, that shortly before his arrival, he had given up attempting any thing further, and shut himself up alone.

As soon as Montfort was announced, he was admitted, as he had anticipated — but little had he anticipated the reception that awaited him.

He was shocked to find the Emperor looking pale and haggard, as if from anxiety and want of sleep, and to feel his hand parched and feverish. He also observed, that although he received him even more affectionately than ever, there was yet a restraint about him which he could not understand: the fact is, the Emperor, although an emperor, was a very bad actor.

As soon as they were alone, Montfort asked if the Emperor had been ill. The latter replied, "I am not well; but—but it is only from anxiety, I believe. Have you seen Maria yet?" Which answer made Montfort naturally conclude his anxiety to be on her account; and he was so thrown off his guard, in spite of all the resolutions to command himself he had been making

during his journey, that he could not speak for alarm, but turned, with a start, a look of doubt and dread upon the Emperor, that demanded an explanation more forcibly than the most energetic words could have done. To which the Emperor, perfectly understanding it, replied, "Oh! I did not mean that she was ill:"—but this speech was followed by a sigh, which, when he was speaking of his daughter's health, seemed so marvellously out of place, that it perplexed Montfort more and more.

However, to the Emperor's second question as to his having seen Maria, he could now answer, and he said, "I saw her as I passed the windows of her apartments."

"And did she see you?"

"I hardly know; for her Majesty left the window at the instant."

"Majesty!" said the Emperor with bitterness, half to himself, "Yes, ill-fated girl! 'Tis so, indeed!"

The father had by this time seen quite enough of Montfort's confusion and agitation to be con-



vinced that his daughter had made no mistake with respect to his feelings for her. As soon as he observed the astonishment occasioned by his last speech, he quickly added, taking his hand kindly, " But whilst I give way to my own feelings, I must not forget those of him to whom I owe so much; yet I know not how to ask what I must ask, so as to spare them. But think, my dear, dear Montfort, whilst I am speaking to you, that you have to answer one who loves you better than any thing on earth, except her whose life you gave me. I know, my noble friend, that you undertook Maria's rescue in a purely disinterested and generous spirit; but say, since you have been so much together, have not other feelings sprung up for her ?"

This was an odd way of quieting his feelings; and such a soothing effect had it on them, that no poor girl ever trembled more at mamma's first discovery of her first love, than did our gallant soldier now, as he answered, " I trust I have never behaved but with respect towards her Majesty."

"Majesty? Oh, do not torment me with that word again! I speak to you of the girl whose life you saved—of my daughter! my child! do you love her?"

"Ay! as even you cannot love her. But I know the madness of it; and no other mortal should have ever heard me avow it but yourself."

"Montfort! but for you, I should now have been childless!—cut off from every earthly tie! You brought the only child to her desolate father, guarded with more than a brother's love: and what return does my cruel fate compel me to make to you for such a gift?—A life of unceasing misery!





The violence of their feelings kept them silent for some time. At length Montfort said in a steady voice, as if his thoughts had in this time fathomed the very depth of his woes, and convinced him that there was nothing now left that could agitate him further, "And have I done this thing to you? and is this the way you treat me for it?"

There was such concentrated misery in what he said, and in his manner, that the Emperor became quite alarmed for him, and strove to soothe him by saying, "What you have done for my happiness was of your own free-will—what you have done against it, was not."

All Montfort's steadiness was gone at once. "Oh! make me believe that!—even if it is a lie worthy of me, make me believe that!" he shrieked out, wringing the Emperor's hand in agony.

"It is truth, my dear, dear son!"

"Ay! make me believe it!" said he again, turning away his head with a convulsive laugh, and staring on vacancy, "Make me believe that I have not been the wretch I think I have!"

The Emperor again tried to calm him, but the calm he succeeded in producing was not less alarming than his violence. He said in a whispering voice, hardly above his breath, "How is it that you do not curse me?"

"I have no cause to do so!"

"Had you not a daughter, who was once as happy as she is good? Where is her happiness now? Where will she ever find it again?"

"In Heaven, my son! where we too only must look for it!"

"What? in that Heaven which I suppose I have tried to deserve by destroying its loveliest work upon earth?"





she sees you thus! Let me not think you consider yourself more than her."

"Think?" repeated Montfort; "think any thing! think all this a piece of admirable acting. It would be a thought worthy of me."

"Oh, my dear Montfort!" said the Emperor, in a tone that would be listened to, "for Heaven's sake consider for a moment. If Maria is already aware of your arrival, I ought to go to her, for I know what she must be suffering; and I cannot leave you thus."

"She suffering, and I only thinking of myself? —it is over now! you may leave me!"

But the Emperor's mind was too confused for him to make use of the opportunity thus afforded him to consider what was best to be done to spare his daughter in the scene that must ensue. An impulse prompted him to lead Montfort to her at once; and, after a few more moments of irresolution, in despair of being able to decide on a better course, he obeyed it.

But perhaps his impulse decided as wisely as

his untroubled reason could have done, for all his endeavours would never have been able to prepare Maria for this interview. Perhaps she would have been worse prepared had she seen her father first alone, for then she would have found out to a certainty that he had told Montfort all she so much wished, but dreaded he should know.

The instant the Emperor had thus decided, he led Montfort by a private way from his own apartments to Maria's, for he did not require to be told where she had gone to as soon as she was aware of his arrival.

The poor girl had been sitting on a sofa just opposite the private door, in a dreadful state of



her before pale face was covered with blushes. The rush back of blood, however, did not bring with it a return of strength, and she would have fallen, but that he sprung forward at the sight, and clasped her madly to his bosom. There she lay, silent and motionless, like a child sleeping on its mother's neck, until she felt her now burning lips pressed to his. She then rose with an effort, and turned her outstretched arms to her father imploringly; but not before she had sensibly—palpably returned his embrace. "Oh! this must not be!" she said.

This appeal, not to rescue her from him she adored, but from herself—from the tumult of her own wild feelings, was not lost on either. Her father sat down upon the sofa, with her in his arms; and Montfort sat beside them, her hand clasped in his, the silence only broken by the short sobs of Maria's weeping, for tears had now come to her relief.

Thus were they placed, and still had they spoken no word of love: but there was no need.

They saw, they knew each other's feelings. Without having confessed, they were in the elysium of a first confession. How vain, how weak to them would have seemed the most burning words that ever fell from an enraptured poet's tongue! They need, they sought to use none such; but Montague said, "Maria! then I know thy whole heart." To which she only replied by again returning the pressure of that hand in which her own was clasped.

"Is it not hard that I should be the only one of the human race to whom the possession of such a treasure ever before gave misery? Oh, Maria!

"Oh! you must not reproach yourself thus; for what ought I to do? you struggled with your feelings from the beginning—I did not, neither for my own sake, nor for yours, until it was too late to attempt it."

"But letting you see those struggles was a crime."

"It was not your fault."

"Then can Heaven ordain such things?" said Montfort fiercely.

"Hush! hush!" replied Maria, starting, and pulling his hand towards her, to press with both of hers. "Oh! you must ask forgiveness for that speech, for it is very wicked."

"I am tried above my strength. When I see you in sorrow, and know that I have caused it, I am taxed beyond what I am able to bear."

"You must not think so: it is a sin to say so; and, if we help each other to bear our burthen, it is not true!"

"And how do I support her whose stay I ought to be?" said he, in a manner so altered, that it

showed Maria's appeal to him had its full effect: and he added, "but I will be different for the future—trust me, I will."

"Would to God I had been born a peasant, for your sakes, my unhappy children!" said the Emperor. "But if our lot is cast amongst the wretched, we must not murmur against our Maker! We must pray to Him."

"What can we pray for, father?" said Maria.

"What can we pray for?" echoed Montfort, both the teacher and the taught forgetting for a moment the lesson so lately read. "I cannot insult my Maker," continued Montfort, "by offering up a prayer which my conscience would tell me was a false one. I cannot ask Him to turn her love from me; and, without that, how can she be happy?"

"Still, we can pray to Him, my children! Young hearts think only of asking for happiness. Alas! your grief will soon make you offer up the prayer of older ones—for resignation. We must pray to him for strength and resignation."

When they became calmer, the Emperor left them to communicate their sad thoughts to each other. "Maria," said Montfort, "when first I began to love you, before I even guessed at your own feelings, I wished I had died at the moment of effecting your escape from prison, and that it had been reserved for some other to bring you safe to your father. Oh! how I wish it now!"

"Wish it?" said Maria, with a shudder.

"Yes!" replied Montfort, gloomily, "you would be happy: and perhaps I was more fit to die then than I am now."

"Wish it not! you must not wish it! It would have been too late for my happiness."

"What!—Then?"

"Yes! Although I did not know it then, my heart was from the moment you perilled your own life to save mine, vowed to you, and to you only—but I became sure of it very soon afterwards. And do you think I would willingly give up my present feelings, if I had a choice, surrounded as they are by woes on every side? Oh! if you

think so, does it not show that you would willingly give up your own?"

"You know that it is not so, Maria; you know I would not give up your love, joined to misery, to be made the happiest person upon earth without it. But there is a difference between wishing that your fate were other than it is, and being willing to exchange my own."

"I do know it: but you must forgive me, for I am a woman, and scarcely yet dare to credit what I know to be true."

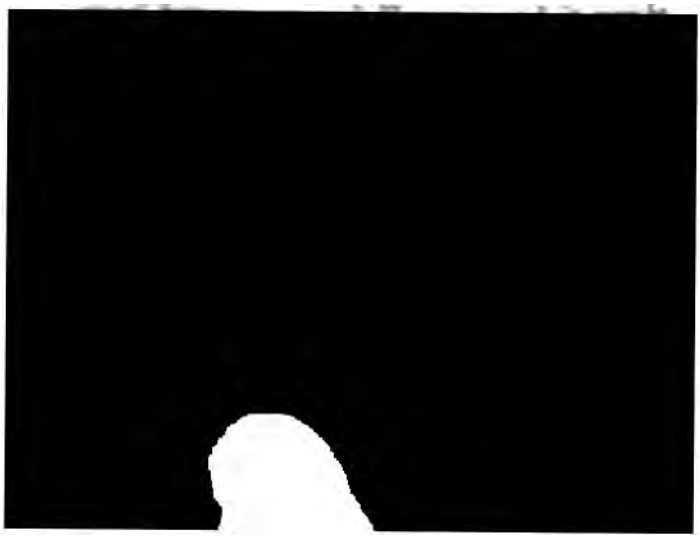
Maria soon spoke again. "That our lot is hard to bear, the soreness of my heart will not let me deny; but do we deserve, my dear, dear friend! to have it lightened, whilst this rebellious spirit is in us towards Him who tries us, and who has a right to try us? You have seen my weakness, and must pity it—not take example by it. After just now reminding you of the submission you owed to the Most High, you immediately heard me murmur against his decrees, and impiously say, 'I had nothing left to ask him

for,' because I saw no hope of the first wish of my heart being granted. I do repent that speech, indeed, on every account: but you are one great cause that I repent it so much; for, weak and unworthy as I know myself to be, it would be worse than useless for me to say I do not know the extent of my power over you: and, oh! that power should be exerted to make you better—not to set you an example of sinfulness. Then, my dearest friend! do not cause me to blame myself more than I now do, by showing me that that example has had a bad effect; but, on the contrary, take the place you ought to take, and teach her how to behave who looks up to you as her guide."

"Maria," said Montfort, attempting to clasp her once more in his arms, "I pray to God to make me humble, to forgive me the sin I have so lately been guilty of, and to grant me strength for the future to enable me to show you how to bear our fate,—and not to be obliged to come to you, as I have been, for that support which I ought to

given. You have been my teacher as yet in all that concerns not only goodness, but strength; but I trust that I shall henceforth show myself less unworthy of being linked on the same fate with you: but do not, my beloved angel! blame yourself for a moment's weakness, when I have been all weakness.

"Marian, you say you know your power over me! but you do not know it: you do not know its extent—nor do I, for I think it has no limit. But do not be alarmed at this, as you well might be but for one thing—that it is a power which you can only exert for good, for goodness is the cause of it. It may be said, that no power should



a mighty power, and for such an end. Oh, Maria! in all my visions you appear an angel leading me to eternal happiness through the pleasantest paths a troubled world affords! but could it be, that you should attempt to lead me from it, your power would be broken as a wand, and I should hate you as I do not hate any thing on earth. I should hate you, not only for the wretchedness you would cause me, but that, through you, my confidence in human nature had received a blow from which it would never recover—a shock that would tumble it in ruins, and bury my bruised spirit under them for ever. Of my love for you, Maria! it is vain to tell you. You know I am the proudest mortal upon earth: you know my happiness is fixed so high, that nothing but possessing your very soul and spirit can give it to me; that your deepest affections, your heart of hearts, must be mine, even as mine is yours; and that I will accept no other happiness."

Maria listened to this speech as if she almost received a new existence from each sentence,



it, because I know myself to be as erring as most of our nature are; and when you shall come to be convinced of this, your disappointment may be so great that you will love me less."

"That is not possible!"

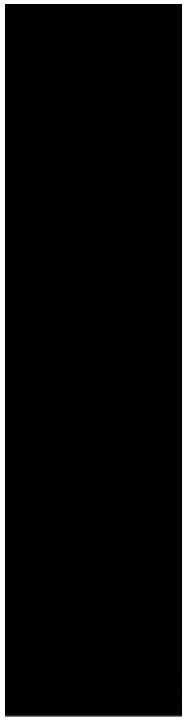
"It is possible! and not only that, but it is possible that your opinion of human nature may then receive something of the shock you speak of —may then sink too low from having before been raised too high with respect to one individual of it. In things that ask principle, I hope I may without presumption demand your confidence. But this is not all; there are many things, independent of it, in which I may displease you."

"Maria, tell me what faults you most fear that you possess which I have not."

"That perhaps I can hardly do; but ask my father."

"He does not think you have one."

"Yes, he does! But if he will not tell you, I will confess them to you for the future as they rise, and then you will be forced to believe them."



ave owned to a father what you had not asked
ne to own to yourself."

"Oh, my beloved girl! did you think me so fastidious? And does not your own heart inform you, it would have been told the feelings of mine long ago, but that from our situations I could not speak with honour?"

"I own it,—and I knew it; but still I feared. We are weak enough to fear when we should not fear—this proves it. But oh! may it not likewise prove that we are weak enough to hope when we should not hope?"

"What do you mean, Maria?"

"May I not flatter myself too far in hoping what I told you a few minutes ago I was sure of?"

"What can you mean?"

"In hoping that I possess your love as I alone would have it—as it is alone worth possessing—for if I have it in that degree, it is all the world to me; if I have it in any less, it is nothing!" said she, bending down and hiding her face in his hand, but pushing his head away from her.

"Oh, my own cruel Maria, I did trust you had confidence in me!"

"And have I not? Then what mortal shall have confidence in another? But what we have read is true—'that love at first is made up of doubts and fears.'"

"Then if it is true, which I do not believe, will my own Maria always tell me when they come into her mind, for when she sees the pain they give me, they will not long remain there?"

"I will; and yet I feel I shall never have to do so, for I shall never doubt again. Montfort, what makes me so full of contradictions? Was I so before?"

"I will not think you are so now. Maria, you once said to me—'Then doubt does not exist between us.'"

"And my heart repeats it now; but, oh, Montfort! I am one who has so long dreamt of a happiness, that when it has become a truth, I fear I may be dreaming still. Will you believe it! but since you told me that you love me, I have



touched myself, to see if I am really awake; and yet I did not doubt your love before. But henceforth I know I do not dream."

Maria then told what had passed with her father, and also of his promise to her; and said, "Can we not be almost happy in this?"

Montfort thought of her question, but did not answer, and was silent for a time.

"Do you not thank him for his promise?"

"Thank him! Oh, I bless him for it."

"And can we not be happy in it?"

"We must try to be so; and if I see my beloved Maria happy, I cannot be miserable. Self, alone, cannot make me altogether wretched."

Maria now requested Montfort to go and take some rest, as he had been travelling all the previous night; and that he had not slept, she thought her own sleepless pillow quite sufficient evidence. She added, "I have been too, too selfish in keeping you here so long."

Montfort said he was not sleepy, and that he had no wish to lie down.

Maria replied, with a faint smile, "You know

[redacted] must tell you when to go to bed sometimes; but you must obey my wishes now as you did then."

"I will, my own! now and ever."

When they were parting, Montfort sought to take one warm farewell. Maria put his arms from her firmly, but gently, and said beseechingly, "My dear, dear friend, this must not be! We are in a situation in which perhaps no female was ever placed before. Of this, you must always think. You must think of it for the sake of a father who has believed to us as no other father would have believed: you must think of it for





your principles and right feelings, and in my inclination to be led by them implicitly. I may surely say, too, that I would guard your delicacy as truly as if you were that which, oh, God! you must never be—my wife."

In a moment afterwards, Montfort would have condemned himself for this cruel but unpremeditated relapse into weakness—so unpremeditated, that it burst from him even whilst he was promising her support—but that Maria, who saw it, quickly mastering the pang that shot across her, said, "Now you have given me confidence, indeed, my dear friend."

"Friend! I do not like that word from you, Maria. It does not speak our feelings for each other."

"My own Charles Montfort then, I bless you for the confidence you have given me—and I trust in you as if I really were what you have called me."

Montfort now, to please Maria, went to his own apartments to try to get some rest, which, however, he well knew the tumult of his feelings would prevent.

CHAPTER XII.

"[illegible] the sole contentment of my heart,
[illegible] from thee I will not hide
[illegible] in my inmost breast are risen,
[illegible] to their extremes."

MILTON.

[illegible] and Montfort was waited
[illegible] the Empress, the daughter said

daughter, with so little ceremony, as to be turned out of a room, be thought strange, be it known, that though partly to serve her own purpose, it was chiefly to please him that this was done. After his own independent spirit had been sickened by the bowing down of the world before him, he felt it quite refreshing to be so treated. So far did he carry this feeling, and so well did his daughter understand it, that she behaved to him with less ceremony than she would have done had he been in any lower station of life. She would often send him for her work or for a book; or tell him to get up and ring the bell, merely to please him. And when he would sometimes call her "a good-for-nothing baggage for treating her father so," she would say, "Come, sir! don't give me any of your Emperor's airs: don't you know that, emperors or no emperors, men were only born to obey us, and save us trouble?" For which impudence she was sure to get a pat on the cheek and a kiss.

Montfort too, who was always led by her, both

when he did know it, and when he did not know it, came as near to this as the difference of his situation, and the feelings which he naturally bore to the father of Maria, would let him.

It cannot be denied that Maria blushed most beautifully as she met Montfort; but when the first pressure of their hands was over, she put her arm through his with an apparent confidence, although it was the very reverse of confidence that made her do it. She had a trick, as all silly girls have, of not letting you look at their faces, if they can help it, when they are blushing, or thinking of blushing,—which is very unwise, as they seldom look more beautiful: and it was to prevent Montfort's doing so, that Maria took his arm.

"Charles," said she, "I wanted to see you alone. You will, I know, when I ask it, try all in your power to cheer my father's spirits; for he requires it more than we do. We can—oh, I am sure we can—be happy in each other's society; but my father will not think so; and we must try to convince him of it. Will you not do this for my sake?"



"Oh, my own Maria! that request, and that smile—it lifts up my heart in spite of myself to see you smile—might make me promise almost an impossibility; but this I would do for his own dear sake alone."

Maria pressed to her side the arm she hung on, as she opened the door of the room where the Emperor was waiting.

The spirits in which Maria herself appeared, and those which her few words seemed to have conjured up in Montfort, had their effect upon her father. Montfort felt, that every thing he said and did for this purpose went to the very heart he loved so much; and the look of approbation which he got from time to time was a rich reward for his exertions.

After dinner their former arrangements were somewhat altered, for now they all sat upon the same sofa—Maria in the middle, of course: and when she felt very grateful to Montfort for his endeavours to raise her father's spirits, she would sometimes, somehow or other, find her



felt that her situation was very much happier than it had been the previous night, and she said, "Why may not future nights find me happier still? Shall I attempt to circumscribe the power of Him who giveth all happiness, because appearances are against mine at present?" And thus she determined to hope against hope; and called sad realities, 'appearances.'

But she wisely considered, that before she expected happiness, she ought, as far as her weak powers would go, to endeavour to deserve it; and this she thought she should best do by laying down rules for her conduct. "He must never kiss me, that 's certain!—unless we are parting for a long absence, or meeting after one. This will not make me wish for parting; but I am sure it will make me long more than ever for meeting. He must never clasp me in his arms—oh, no! never! Heigh-ho!! But he never will think of doing so again; and it would never, never do! But my hand—I cannot help his squeezing that!—and it is some consolation to me!"

In fact, she abandoned the hand altogether, as a position quite untenable—a part of her territory she could not possibly defend with success. It was not only exposed and liable to be invaded at any moment, but a rebel power existed within it, so that when it was squeezed, it would return the pressure again, even if she had determined to the contrary. But could she have arranged it ever so well, to say the truth, her wishes did not lie that way.

The above is a sketch of her little code—which she did not exactly put in words; but which, or something like which, floated through her brain.

sleep when I sent him to bed in the morning. Ah! if he were my—if he were—were—were always with me, I would never allow him to forget them, however sleepy he might be; but I am sure he won't! He never used to forget them! But I 'll ask him to-morrow, certainly."





we must be very bad actors if we do not ourselves look happy; and this appearance in the other, neither could see without feeling real satisfaction in their own bosoms: fortunately too, they did not look into those bosoms too narrowly, and reflect too deeply—fortunately, they were not of dispositions (O how I envy them!) to reason, with Imlac, "that every man may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere." To plan how they might cheat each other of their griefs was their occupation when they were alone, and to carry these plans into execution, their employment when together. To set, in the fairest light, all that they still possessed—to paint, in the darkest colours, all they must have suffered had they been doomed to that separation they had every earthly reason to expect—and to make each other forget, as far as it was possible, that which they might never hope for, seemed the end of their beings.





if not to conceal my own; and that is half the business of an ambassador."

"But even in that respect I have my doubts, for I think, with respect to myself, you pretend to have discovered more than you really did."

"Do I? If you will not let him beat me for making you laugh at him," said Maria to her father, who had joined them time enough to hear the last sentence or two, "I will prove to you which of us is right."

"He shall not beat you unless you deserve it," replied the Emperor.

"Then I rather think I shall have an opportunity of beating you with your father's consent, for you are looking so full of mischief at this moment that I am sure you will deserve it," rejoined Montfort.

Maria then gave, in her most comic style, his conduct on several occasions when he had flattered himself that he had concealed his thoughts, with quite diplomatic address. The moonlight scene by the lake-side was not forgotten, and her imita-



perhaps, to decide the point whether or no she was to be punished for her impertinence; and punished it was, but not more than its owner must have been conscious of deserving, for she did not appeal to her father on the subject.

However, Montfort punished her also in another way, for he said, "I think, Maria, you should have been cautious how you mentioned that lake. Has she ever told you, Sir, (for by this title Montfort always addressed the father of Maria when they were alone, in accordance with their wishes and his own feelings,) what I caught her doing there?" And forthwith he gave, in Maria's own style, her stone-throwing exploit; at which her father quite laughed out, and said, "Oh, my madcap! what would the Countess of A—— have thought, if she had seen you?"

"I do not know," replied Maria, "but I was such a hoyden at the moment, that I think there would have been some chance of her being thrown into the lake too, if she had said any thing."

"Then I may think myself lucky to have escaped so well?" asked Montfort.

"Why, I could not have drowned you, you know, however much I had wished it, as you say you can swim as well as Li himself.

A little after this, Maria looked as if making up her mind to discover some grand secret, which Montfort observed, and said, "Can you be meditating the making of another cake, for I have hardly seen you look so profound since that great event took—or rather, did not, take place?"

"No!" replied Maria, with a half blush and half smile, that contradicted her words—"No! I am not meditating on any thing of half so much consequence to you now, whatever it might have been once. After having paused for a moment, she continued, pointing to his heart, "But tell me, what have you got there?"

"I know of nothing good," he said aloud; but added, in a whisper, "except such love as is almost worthy of thee, Maria!"

"Oh, but," said she, quickly raising again the eyes that had been cast down at his speech, as if determined not to be put off her intention now

she had once resolved upon it—"I do not mean in the heart, but on the heart."

"Why, surely you don't know!"

"Do I not?"

"If you do, you must be a witch."

"Only inasmuch as every woman is a witch who can see what she wishes to see when it happens to be before her eyes. But if that is necessary to the making of a man a wizard, I think I know one who must not set up as a conjurer."

"You impertinent girl!" said Montfort, now beating her openly, "but I can hardly believe yet that you know. What is it?"

There was as much mischief as triumph in Maria's face, as she teazed and tantalised her lover by deliberately taking a pair of scissors from her work-box, cutting off one of her now again long locks, (at which her father, who did not understand the meaning of the manœuvre, said, quite in a rage, "What are you about, child?") tying it up in a coil with a bit of silk, and handing it to him, with that on her cheek which at first

was a smile, but which, before her short speech was ended, nearly turned to something else,—"Dame, Janet! will you give it to me for one kiss? At all events this is tied with a smarter string, if the silver is not altered since I saw it last." And here she turned away her face, to hide her trembling eyes.

I have no simile ready made to compare Mamie to whilst Mara was plaguing him, I must invent one, and beg my reader to imagine that a thing is an ideal looking-glass—that is, one that would always reflect wrong impressions. At first, he was so anxious, that he looked serious whilst Mara was laughing; but as the truth came



her with a fire in his eyes before which her own sunk.

"Give it up, even to thee? Never! Maria would not ask that which would be a cruelty, even if the blessed head it came from had a right to lie there! I am too violent; but I am not moved by what you have said, alone. No! I too have a secret to confess—a secret I meant to have confessed to her ear alone at first; but I will tell it now. Maria must not think, because I would be blind to some things, that I was blind to all: she must not think that the self-devotion which would have exalted the sternest hero, could be shown by a timid girl, and I be so stupid as not to observe it. Oh! night and day, in my dreams and in my thoughts, there was the angel form—the loveliest and the dearest that ever was created, gliding between me and destruction—daring, without one thought of self, death in its most violent form, to save one who never can love her as she deserves. Maria! I cannot laugh at my tale, but need I say more?—do you understand me?"

save another's and exposing herself to be killed for her own private convenience—for when Montfort had set forth her act as only a lover could have set it forth, she said to her father, "But had I a right to do it?"

Her father does not appear to have thought it necessary to answer so silly a question directly; but after having kissed Maria until he had quite excited Montfort's envy, he said, as he was leaving the room, "How could you have blamed yourself for loving her? How is it possible you could have helped it after such an act?"

The Emperor was wrong: Montfort would have loved Maria just as surely, though not so suddenly, if she had run away. But if such an act might not prove the seed from which love would spring, it would most certainly prove the hot-house to force that seed forward when once it was sown.

When the lovers were left alone, Maria said, "And is it possible you could have thought that what you have just told me you saw, proceeded from gratitude alone?"



"It has just struck me," replied Maria, "that er what you have told me to-day, I need no nger wonder you could blind yourself to my real elings when you were in danger in the hut."

This sentence sufficiently accounted for the hange which Montfort so little approved of—it howed what was the recollection which had come weeping like a bird of ill omen and of prey, over the sky-lark feelings that had so lately sung to him of Heaven and of hope, and hushed them into silence, and sent them down again trembling to earth: but she added, "Oh, Charles! when I think of that time, have I not much to be thankful for? Were ever such hours passed by any one before? I shudder when I think of them! They surely were the very dregs of the bitterest cup that ever was mixed for mortal lips."

"No, my own, they were not!" replied Montfort, allowed, now that she was sad, to press close to her side.—"No, my own, they were not! Death itself—the death of those we love—is not the greatest evil. When a loved object only dies,

If a woman is so stupid as not to know how to let her lover see she is pleased with him without telling it out in plain language, or staring him full in the face, she does not deserve to have a lover. To Maria, this never was the least difficulty. A single ray of light more than usual in her eyes, when they were turned up—or, when they were turned down—an opening out of the lashes from each other, like the parting of the legs of a spider when they are suddenly stretched forth—a pressure of the lips so slight that it barely serves to curb their pouting—or the smallest possible expense of breath in the faintest fragment of a sigh that ever yet was heard—a breath so light, that it might have stolen over an Æolian harp, and waked no sound—were only a thousandth part of the ways she had of doing so. Which of these methods Maria now chose, or why she did not choose to speak out as usual, I shall not say; but it was so well understood by Montfort, that he thought it not only more eloquent than any oration Cicero ever delivered, but much more convincing.



tinue: it differs in its object, but it is still the same feeling. To speak from experience," continued she, smiling, "I am sure I have never been without it, (nor do I expect I ever shall)—never, from the moment my first foolish fancy was excited by a worthless bauble or gilded toy, until my last was taken with something equally worthless."

The effect of Maria's last sentence was greatly increased by her laying her pretty hand on his arm, with all the fondness that the fondest but most modest nature dares to show.

It may be thought that Montfort was called upon to pay that hand with burning kisses—but he did not give it one—and yet its owner did not seem disappointed. He looked at it as if he were afraid to touch it, lest he might frighten it away, and said, "Girl! the bauble is not worthless now —I believe it was once, or worse than worthless —but you have made it very different from what it was."

Maria looked down too—I know not for what reason, unless it was for the sake of being like her



[illegible] better, but it is the lo
must exalt, however low
has made you better, altho
[illegible] to love before."

At this moment they
coming, and Maria hastil
but it proving a false alarm
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"Charles, I will not be flattered any more to-night."

"Why, how do you know what I mean?"

"Oh, I must be stupid indeed, if I did not understand your looks, even though your words were less plain."

"But how do you know the 'danger was not in your own vanity, which made you think so?'"

"That is a paltry revenge! and only a copy of me, after all!"

But this show of happiness—these forced spirits could not last; for Nature, notwithstanding she may be out-talked, and out-reasoned for a time, is hard to be cheated at last. It was in vain they brought their highest feelings to aid them in the struggle—in vain they said, "Has not the noblest, the best of parents done all he can do for us—has he not sanctioned our love with the highest earthly authority—and how can we show our gratitude to him but by striving to be happy?"—that struggle was a hopeless one; and although they bore up under their load for a long time, they found that in spite

of their utmost efforts it would crush them at last, for it weighed heavier upon them every hour. It was a power that conquered, not by violence, but by constancy. When they exerted their strength, they could resist it successfully; but what strength can be always exerted? What exertion will not flag at last? And when theirs did flag, there was their enemy pressing them with undiminished force. Oh, had they had but hope, however distant, they could have lived on; but the single solace that was left to man when the vials of wrath were poured out upon him to countervail all his evils, was not for them. Montfort's buoyant spirit sunk to earth, and the light was leaving Maria's eyes.

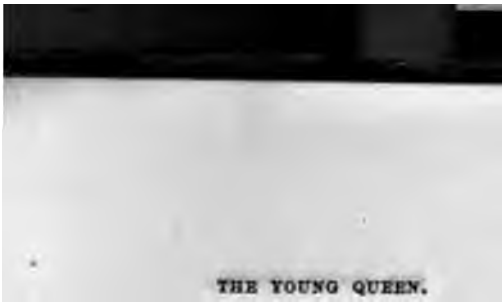
But long after they felt this change in themselves, it only had its effect upon them when they were not together; and this was the means of keeping them in ignorance of each other's feelings for some time. In Montfort's most moody moments, a word, a look from Maria, even her magic presence alone, would make him feel a new spirit

him. And to Maria, Montfort really was
n which rose upon the dark billows of her
ed mind, cheering them, and giving them a
whilst it lasted, that did not belong to them.
nsequence of this, the unhappy father, who
mes saw them apart, discovered their real
s before they were known to each other.
soon as he made this discovery, in hopes
hange of scene might rouse them, he
sed they should go to the baths of B——;
ich they were both delighted, for there the
erial family were always accustomed to live
less form than when at the capital—indeed,
ould have said, without any form whatever,
nothing was more common than to meet the
peror walking about alone, or with his daughter
ging on his arm, through the beautiful woods
glades; or to see them both up-scrambling
ngst the rocky hills by which this little para-
of a valley was hemmed in.

In the evening of the day of their arrival at
—, they all went out to walk, the moment an

early dinner was over. But although all were delighted at the change from town to country, the others did not show it so obstreperously as did our friend Lion. He went barking and bounding on before them, quite recovered from his wounds, and seemingly delighted at hearing his own voice once more echoed by surrounding cliffs. If he had been able to speak, I am sure he would have said he had not had one good comfortable bark since he had been living at court.

And now that I have mentioned our friend Li again, it behoves to say, that he has not all this while been forgotten by his companions, although I have passed him over in silence. Indeed I should by no means like to have insinuated such a thing to Maria, and at the same time have stood within reach of her fingers—nevertheless, I will not deny that her fair arms were less frequently about his neck, now she had got back him for whose sake they used to be so often there. Still had she not lost one particular of her love for him, for it is utterly false to call love an 'absorbing passion,'



if by that is meant that it withdraws our affections from all other objects, to heap them upon one: on the contrary, the more full the heart is of a high and noble passion, the more room, strange to say, is there in it for other kindly affections; and never are family and friends so dear to us as then: instead of drying up the feelings, it opens, as it were, their well-springs, and they flow forth on all around.

Montfort, too, loved Li more than ever: for her he had saved became every day dearer to him, although he had long ago pronounced that to be impossible.

The true reason that he has not been mentioned is, that I—I, the historian—the writer of these annals—found it difficult to introduce him into such scenes as I have lately described, they consisting chiefly of dialogue, in which, it will be allowed, he was not so well calculated to take part, as in those of action.

One of the fancies, however, which Li had taken into his head, deserved to have been recorded





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ll the famous [illegible] which [illegible] the

then, and shall be so now. He always slept at the mat at Maria's door, (of which Napoleon's Mameluke is supposed to have been a copy,) and it was her custom to call him in, and caress him, as soon as she was dressed; after which, he invariably ran off to Montfort's apartments, where, having received a like salutation, he always returned to Maria. This happened so regularly, that it seemed as if he were the bearer of their first morning greeting to each other. "Do not laugh at me!" said Montfort to Maria one day when they were speaking of it, "but I never see his noble figure come in without thinking of all I owe him: and then I never fail to kiss his great head."

We now return to the rest of the party that went forth with Li, to refresh their pomp-and-city-worn souls in the green woods—to "lave their souls with nature's baptism."

At first, Maria leant on her father's arm, and Montfort ran on playing with the dog; but when they got to where the trees stood thicker, he managed, somehow or other, to trip over the roots of one of them, and gave himself a little pain in the arm that had been wounded—for which he got a severe scolding from Maria, who looked even as if she were going to fall foul of Li; but she contented herself by saying, "You, my poor dog! are not supposed to have more sense; but he is. But I am determined you shall not be such a child again,"—turning round to Montfort, and taking his other arm, by way of a punishment, as she finished her speech.

I scarcely think Montfort's fall was intentional, for he hit himself a little too hard; but had he known he was to be thus punished, I rather fancy he would have fallen before.

"There!" said the Emperor, turning off into

another path, "one arm is enough for you at a time."

"Oh, will you leave us?" returned Maria, with a tone of more regret than Montfort would have expected when her only hardship was that of being left alone with him. Her father did not answer her question, but asked, "Will you return without me, or shall I join you again here?"

"Whichever you please, Sir," replied Maria, much more gravely than usual; and, for the first time that Montfort had observed it, looking as if she wished to say more to her father than she thought it proper to say.

"Don't walk too far, my love, to tire yourself; and let us meet here," said the Emperor as he left them.

"You cannot, of course, guess where he is gone," said Maria, as soon as her father was out of hearing—"It is to a walk that my mother was particularly fond of; and whenever we come to B——, he always goes there for the first time alone—after that, I accompany him; but he never takes even me at first. I did not think he

would have done so now, as you are with us, or I would have proposed to have walked in some other direction."

"But why should you not wish him to go there now more than at any other time, as it seems he would go alone at all events?"

"Oh, I hardly know! but I fear it will make him more sad now than ever," said Maria, as she, for a time, looked sad herself.

"My own Maria must not let her spirits sink, for if her father's do, he will require ours the more to cheer him—and, as to mine, she knows they are not so much under my control as under hers."

"And this, also, is not a place to be sad in, is it, Charles?"

"I thought," replied Montfort, "that all places with you had been the same; but don't you feel that we shall be happier here?"

"I should always be happier in such scenes, than in those we have left, even if you were with me in both; but in this dear place I shall be doubly happy, for it reminds me of some of those I first began to—to know you in."

"Maria," said Montfort, pressing her arm earnestly, "finish that speech as you first meant to do!"

"Why?"

"I so much wish you to do it!"

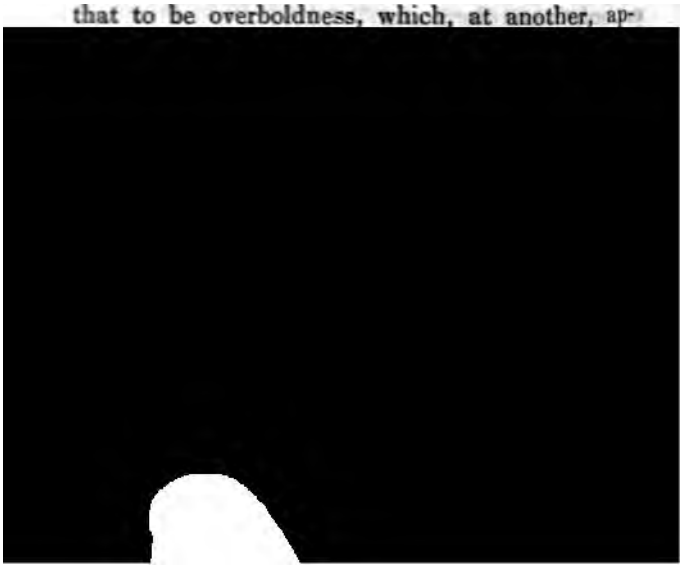
"No!" said Maria, shaking her head.

"Do, my dear, dear girl!"

"Then, it reminds me of those I first began to love you in."

"Why will my own Maria sometimes speak to me as I wish her to do—and at others be ashamed to do so?"

"I do not know! but I, at one time, fancy that to be overboldness, which, at another, ap-



"That I do, my own! but I will not let you think you ever can be bold. Could I love boldness in you?—and does not your speaking as I wish you to do, make me love you more than ever?"

When Maria proposed to return, she said, "I should not like to keep my father waiting to-night."

"I can enter into his feelings, indeed, Maria!" replied Montfort; "for he says thy mother was like thee."

"She was only like me, Charles, when I am good! Do you strive to make me more like her—for so only can you make me more happy—and you only have the power."

"Maria! I think I tell you of your faults as honestly as you tell me of mine. That I consider to be a sacred duty between those who love; for that we should know them, no one can deny, and from whom else can we bear being told of them so well?"

"That is very true! for where we know a lecture proceeds from love for us, instead of from

any less soothing feeling, it has more than a common lecture's effect, and none of its bitterness. But, Charles! I don't think you ever gave me more than one or two in your life."

"That may not be my fault, Maria!"

"What!—again flattering one you pretend to love!"

"Flatter—and pretend to love! Oh, Maria! I would give you such a lecture now, if I had only time."

As Montfort said this, they reached the spot where they had left the Emperor, and found he had just returned there to wait for them.

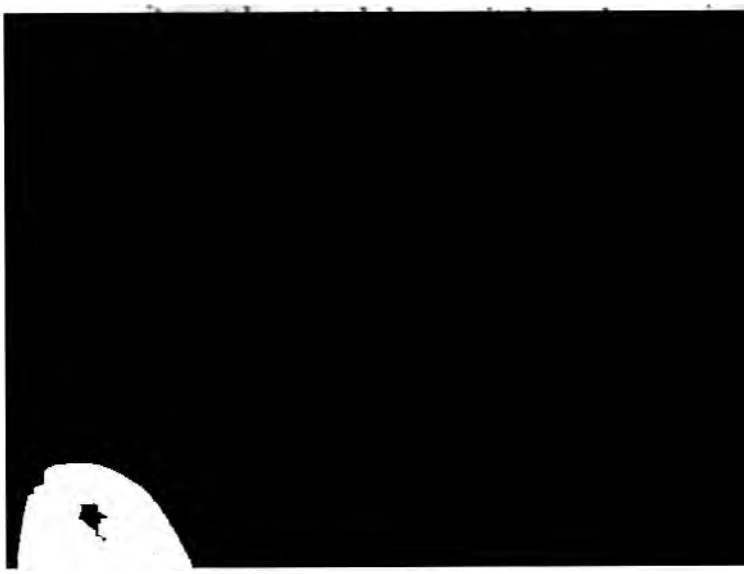


spirit of her in whose presence it now almost seemed to him that he was, had its influence. The Empress had been blessed with that happy sort of mind which appears to have less power to perceive evil than good. In all difficulties and reverses her song was still of hope; and ever when hope was almost shut out from their view, she would say to her husband, "If we have not much to hope, we still can trust. As long as we try to act rightly, and as long as we are left together, can any thing happen which we are not well able to bear? Time will pass away, and then a blessed eternity will be ours if we endeavour to deserve it; for though our endeavours be but weak, if they are sincere, he who has contrived so much for our good here will not be a severe judge hereafter. Nature alone may tell us this; but when we look to the hopes that are given us beyond what even nature's voice can say, can we not safely trust?"

The Emperor now recollected and dwelt upon so many of her conversations which had taken

place in that walk, that although what is called a strong-minded man,* their aptness almost startled him. They seemed like the voice of his wife speaking to him from the grave—that voice which had never spoken to him in vain, now made more sacred than even in the moments of their first love.

Who has not felt, on visiting a spot which some absent friend has made dear—the scene, perhaps, of some interesting conversation—how freshly thoughts come back upon the mind, recalled, we know not how, by the sight of objects we then were scarce conscious of noting? This, although



This may be accounted for by the state of his feelings naturally leading him to think and dwell on subjects that associated with them; but to one who was at that time more under the power of feeling than of reason, it did not seem as if his mind was influenced in this natural manner. To him the influence was from beyond nature, and it produced in him a hope which caused the cheerfulness Maria and Montfort had remarked.

END OF VOL. II.





THE YOUNG QUEEN.

VOL. III.





YOUNG QUEEN:

A TALE.

In that tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears.
BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
JAMES COCHRANE AND CO.,
WATERLOO PLACE.
1835.



THE YOUNG QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

" For with thee
Certain my resolution is to die;
How can I live without thee? how forego
Thy sweet converse and love so dearly join'd!"
MILTON.

ALTHOUGH going to B—— did rally the minds of the sinking pair at first, yet soon they found the enemy of their peace more powerful in such a lovely solitude as this, than amidst the pomp and bustle from which they had been so glad to get away. Maria became more unhappy than she had thought it possible for her to be whilst the two on whom hung " her life's hope " were spared to her. Then came self-upbraiding that she should be

thus unhappy; and this upbraiding was almost turned into remorse by other feelings that now troubled her peace, but which she could not overcome, although she thought them wrong. She would gaze upon Montfort in silence for minutes together; but when he caught her eyes, instead of meeting his with the confiding love she used to do, she would turn away from him with a deep blush. "Why," said she, "should I blush thus, but that I know I am less worthy of him than I was? Less worthy? Is that true? Oh! help me! help me to chase away this horrid thought, Thou who alone canst help!"

In truth her gentle spirit was grieved and bruised, for the innocent being conceived herself to err, and in a case where she could admit no counsellor; and with the idea of guilt came all its fears: she feared that the feelings which shook her with such power might be seen by him from whom one hard thought would strike to her very heart. This feeling, and this dread, had the effect on her of wasting fever. Her eyes waxed hollow;

her hands were parched: she became a thing of wishes, tremblings, sighs, and secret tears—tears for her fancied guilt. But her trials must be no further known. They are those which many of her sex are doomed to bear. They are those in which they most require support. What do they meet with?

But although when first under this influence Maria was most agitated in Montfort's presence, a perfect change soon took place in this respect, and she fled to that presence as her surest refuge from her own thoughts. She fled from herself to him, and there she found peace—peace which solitude gave her not. "But how is this," said she, "that in his presence, where I used to be agitated so much, is the only place where I now feel safety?"

Had Maria read Zimmerman, she would have found her case not to be so very uncommon, and that she had adopted the very remedy he recommends for what he admits to be one of the dangers of solitude. By the way, that same Zim-

merman knew something of human nature, notwithstanding what some of the little men of the present day may say to the contrary.

Whilst Maria's mind was in this state, Montfort had been obliged to go to V——, and was not expected home until the evening of the second day from that of his departure. The morning after he had left B—— her father was unavoidably employed ; and Maria, who felt too much disturbed to allow her to remain at home alone, or with such company as she could command, went out attended only by Lion, to a walk which was considered private, and where the females of the Imperial family had been always accustomed to go alone.

It was now the beginning of autumn. The leaf was faded to the point of beauty, but not beyond it. It was that one month in the year in which our more northern scenes catch a glow from the earth which the skies, alas! never give them—that one month when even the colouring of the olive and cypress-clad lands yield in beauty to ours. A few fallen leaves were strewing the paths

[redacted]bers came whirling to the earth around
[redacted]ome fell and floated away on the little
[redacted]that murmured along the bottom of the
[redacted]with a hollow sound; and Maria watched
[redacted]ntil they were lost to her sight, and thought
[redacted]ds being borne along on the stream of time
[redacted]hut out from our view by the grave. The
[redacted]too, to which these dead children of the year
[redacted]urried away—the eternity of waters—was a
[redacted]ge of that endless world whither we know
friends are gone and we are hastening.
[redacted]then leant against a tree, and, as her eyes
[redacted]anded a rich view of wooded hills and dells,
[redacted]raved prettily enough about the scene. "It
[redacted]ecay, I know; but it does not seem to speak
[redacted]decay. Like the colouring of the cheek of a
[redacted]vely consumptive, its very beauty will not let us
[redacted]ink that there is death beneath it."

Even from Maria's own account the scene was
[redacted]t such as to inspire melancholy; but if melan-
[redacted]oly was previously in the mind, it was one which
[redacted]at disposition would readily seize upon. In this

mood, as if willing to throw off the load that oppresses us, we often fasten on the most pleasing object near, and, if I may so express myself, identify our feelings with it, and pin our hopes upon it. Whilst Maria was thus gazing on a branch which hung over the river, whose leaves struck her as being the most beautifully coloured of any in her sight, a little rougher blast swept by, and all its beauty was floating down the stream. "Oh! there go all my hopes at once!" said the over-excited girl, and tears sprung into her eyes, when, at the instant, she heard a quick footstep, and Montfort was at her side. He had returned unexpectedly, and had come to search for her.

"Oh, my Maria! have I deserved this?" said he, as he took her hand with a reproachful kindness—the most touching of all kindness.

"Deserved what, Charles?"

"There is something in your heart, Maria, which you do not tell me of; or, why are you in tears?"

"Perhaps," said she, attempting to smile them

away, " I thought to-morrow evening a very long time to look forward to."

" Maria!" (Montfort had before taken one of her hands, and now he took the other,) " I must have a serious answer from you, for any thing that concerns your happiness must be serious indeed to me!"

" Then, dear Charles! this scene had an effect on my spirits which I can hardly account for; but there is always sadness in an autumnal view."

" That might make Maria grave; but, unconnected with other thoughts, it would not cause those tears."

" And is my own Charles come back to chide me?" said Maria, in a tone which totally prevented him from pursuing the subject further at present.

" Chide you, Maria? and what makes me chide you?"

" Love for me, and nothing else."

He now only sought to dry those eyes, every tear of which he would have given a drop of his

heart's blood to have saved. "My own girl, do not cry, or I shall think I have been unkind to you. And, Maria, to receive me in tears after an absence of four-and-twenty hours? For shame! Come, let us walk! I know you have not been out long, and a little exercise will do your spirits good."

Now Maria had her second guardian with her, they soon broke the bounds of the private walk, and went along a pathway which led through the woods beside the little stream I spoke of.

As soon as her lover's presence, and the scene (for after he had joined her, she wondered how she could have thought it melancholy), had their full influence in calming her, and she had got composed and cheerful, Montfort ventured to renew the subject which had already distressed her, and said, "My Maria must not think me unkind if I tell her the love I bear her gives me a right to share her griefs, that I may assist her to support them. There is something in her heart which she does not tell me of; and, by that love, I claim to know it."

"Oh, Charles!" said Maria, trembling, and bursting into tears afresh, "is there nothing in your own heart which you do not tell me of?"

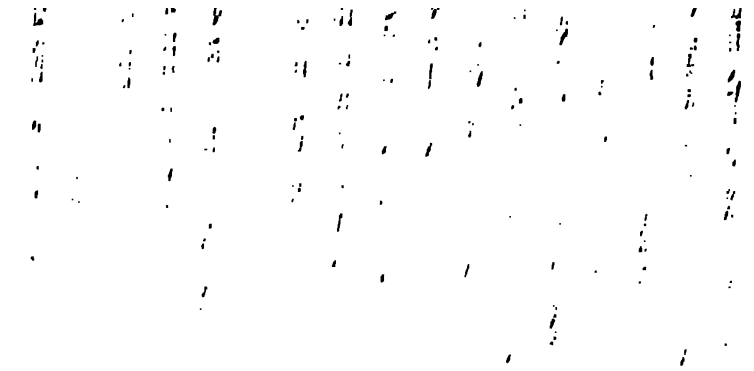
Montfort's conscience struck him dumb for a moment; but he soon replied, "Nothing that I *can* tell you of!"

"Nor is there in mine!"

"But is there any thing," returned Montfort, "that we should totally conceal from each other? For is there any feeling, or weakness as my self-condemning Maria may call it, which I would not seek to support her under? And on her aid I know I might always count."

"There are things, my beloved Charles," said Maria, seeming to force herself to speak, "of which one person cannot tell another, however much that person may be loved."

"But, my own angel! this feeling, or this concealment, is injuring your health. You must not think that any change in you can escape my observation. I have seen, for many days, that that loved cheek has become paler, and this dear hand





"Maria, I would sooner have a viper sting my own heart than give one unnecessary pang to yours; but the torture of suspense, where you are concerned, I cannot bear. Oh, tell me, my unhappy girl! is the grief you feel like that which is weighing me to earth in spite of all the blessing of your presence, and the goodness of your father. Is it like the miserable thought that breaks in upon my happiest hours? I see you all that is lovely. I know you all that is amiable and good. And then comes in the overwhelming recollection that this never can be mine! I feel that I am banished, severed, cut off for ever—that I have no hope, where nothing else but hope can give me happiness. Oh, Maria! tell me, I expect it of you—is this the cause?"

"Do you feel thus?" said Maria: "then I know too well the misery my unhappy love has brought upon you! But could I have told you of all this voluntarily? Did not every feeling for you and for myself forbid it? Oh! I seem as if I degraded my sex, and were unworthy of you for

owning it now. But you—your suffering has torn it from me;" and she looked as if she bitterly regretted the necessity that had made her speak thus—as if she felt disgraced.

"Maria, what do I hear you say? Degrade your sex? Oh! you would not belong to that, from me, deeply-honoured sex, if you did not feel as you do. My beloved girl! we deceived ourselves when we believed we could live as He who formed us intended we should not live, and yet be happy. But, my own! you must not add to the load of misery you are doomed to bear, by self-reproaches which you do not deserve. You condemn yourself for feelings which you cannot help: that is dishonouring Him whom you seek to honour. Do you think He will condemn you for not avoiding that which He has made it impossible you should avoid? Do you think He will not reward you for controlling, by the help of His aid—that aid which you never cease to ask—what it is so difficult to control? Oh, believe me! we are not condemned unjustly. Then do not, my pure and beloved

angel! unnecessarily increase your own misery, and thereby double mine."

Maria's tears, although they flowed as fast, now flowed less bitterly.

Montfort continued—"And my knowing your feelings, you cannot regret, except for the pain you think it will give me; for you cannot believe any thing so hateful of me but that I would seek to support you under them, and guard you and shield you from them, although I suffer them a thousand times more powerfully myself."

"You know I can have no idea of such a thing as guilt in you; but I can believe in your weakness, for, oh, Charles! I feel my own."

"I do not boast of my own strength, my beloved! but in all that relates to your trials, of whatsoever nature, I feel a strength to support you under them, that is not mine."

Maria looked at him, calm in mind, in comparison to what she had been, but agitated in body, with much of her former confidence and more than her former love; and said—"I tremble again

to think I might have fallen into less worthy hands!"

"You need not do so, Maria; for one thought breathed unworthy of you would have turned your love to indignation, though your heart had broken from it."

"That my feelings told me, even when I reproached myself. But, oh! what would those feelings be," said she, pressing to his side until her cheek met his shoulder, and rested there—"if you knew all you now know, and your thoughts had erred as much as mine did?—if you had condemned me as I condemned myself? Oh, my beloved Charles! I almost fear to speak, lest I should say too much! But can I say too much to him who has restored my peace of mind as well as saved my life? Happy we can never be! but at least you have removed remorse from amongst my feelings."

They were now relieved from the painful task of deceiving each other; but this relief was dearly purchased, for with it came the knowledge of each

...er's sufferings. To the father they still tried to ...are this weight of misery, and they assisted each ...her in endeavouring to keep him ignorant of it; ...t it was in vain.

I do not mean to pursue this wretched subject ...rough all its forms and changes, until their tor...ented souls found comparative peace at last—...hat peace which is peace, because it has no single ...rthly hope left to disturb it. Let us then turn ...way our eyes from them for a time, as we do from one who is undergoing a dreadful operation which it is not necessary we should look upon, however much we may be interested in its result. I therefore take up my tale when that which was most violent and earthly in their loves had passed away, and what remained was so linked to images of death that it might seem they had become enamoured of the grave—that grave that offered them the hope which life had not to give—a lasting union. It was sad indeed to look at them, and see what a short time ago was health, and spirits, and a capability of enjoying all the good

which is spread around us, and then to hear them talk to each other when they were alone.

The walk where each had first become certain of the other's unhappiness was sadly endeared to them. They liked to sit on a seat commanding the view Montfort had found Maria contemplating, and cast their eyes over that scene which had now nearly lost all its beauty.

"Oh, Charles!" said Maria, once when they were there, "I know not why! but I can bear to think of your death, and that all your hopes have fallen like the beautiful leaves which lately were the very life and being of this prospect. I can bear to think that all your happiness in this life has passed away—yes! even to look at you, and reflect that you will soon be in the grave—but of my father, I cannot bear to think. To the author of my being, I feel as if I were a parricide. Is it that I love you less? Oh, no! surely not! But it seems to me that I owed to him a debt of happiness which I have not paid—neither have I any thing to give in exchange for it. From you, what-

taken away, I have at least paid a

own angel!" said Montfort, thinking
ould say to comfort her, when he was
by Maria.

extremity as they were driven to, the
become morbidly sensitive; and now
used to seem to Maria only an innocent
of endearment, appeared to be wrong.
, what a very different view we take of
hings whilst we fancy ourselves firm in
and when we know we are just going
At mid-day objects seem to have no
but in the evening they come out plain
So is it with life, and the leaving of
refore are they the only truly wise who
ime that which alone can disperse those

under this feeling that Maria interrupted
, but in her sweetest, most endearing
"I am no angel yet, Charles!—but
s my trust to be. I am now only your

fond-hearted, erring, loving girl!—and so you must call me—no angel, until we meet in heaven, Charles!"

"My own beloved girl, is not this enthusiasm?" said Montfort, with a sad smile.

"Perhaps it is!" said she, in the same manner, "but it is my present feeling."

"And therefore it is to be attended to! for what feeling of my erring girl (as she calls herself) does not point to good, although it may be warped a little by the present state of her mind? But one thing my beloved Maria must do for her own sake, for my sake!—let her good sense combat this feeling about her dear, dear father. Oh, Maria! I cannot, alas! bid you not be unhappy about him! I cannot ask you not to feel all the misery we have brought upon him. But I can ask you not to condemn yourself for your conduct towards one for whose happiness there is no moment of your past life in which you would not have given up your own. Maria! It is your duty to try to get rid of this improper thought, for it disturbs your mind

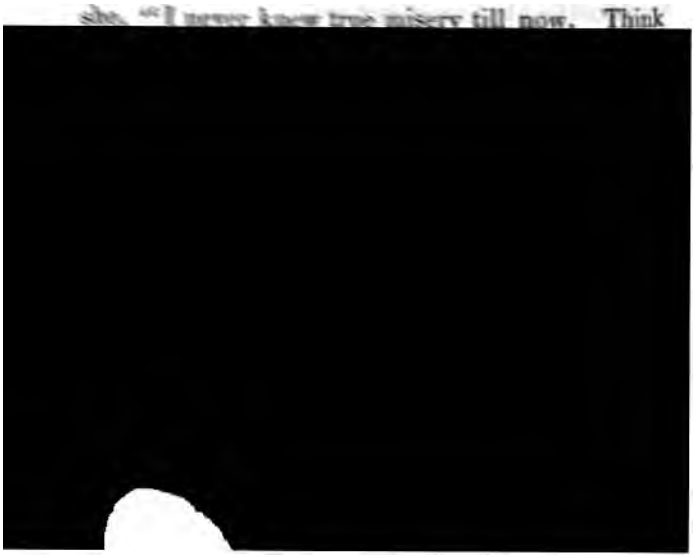
now, when it should not be disturbed—now, when I see—plainly see, that it is fast approaching Him who made it. Oh, my own beloved! let me do, in this one instance, that which you always do for me—calm you, and pacify you, and purify your thoughts, and make you more fit for that change which will ere long take place. On earth, we have nothing to support us through the trials we have to bear, but the consciousness of good intentions. Let us take care that we do not give up that one support when reason bids us not to do so."

"It is my feelings that upbraid me—not my reason. But help me! and reason shall triumph."

What Montfort said was true. Maria had indeed watched his mind with more than the anxiety of a mother watching a sick child, and sought to prepare him for that death which she saw was not far off—to deck him out, it seemed, to her a more acceptable sacrifice. Every symptom of rebellion against Him who sent the hard fiat forth—of repining or impatience, was charmed away by her holy

[redacted] Hourly did she talk to him when her mother was not near, of "that Heavenly Father to whom it was their trust that they were going," for at first his feelings were not what they should have been. Something of that fierce spirit had [redacted] which urged him once to say, "Can [redacted] such things"—but, at a similar moment to this, when Maria's agony of mind made her throw herself at his feet, and clasp his knees, and beseech him to have mercy on her soul, his proud heart was not beat, but broken down at last.

"What is it that I have suffered for you," said she, "I never knew true misery till now. Think



greater torments than any thing else can inflict upon me—to reflect upon your conduct, and then I know your own sense and feelings will make you do so. Oh! shall we murmur at our sufferings, when we think of what has been borne for us, and from us? and shall we forfeit heaven because we have lost earth?"

"Forgive me, my Maria! you know, my own lot I could bear in silence; but it is yours that drives me to madness."

"And are we to choose our afflictions? Do you suppose it is my own sufferings that grieve me most? No! personal afflictions are light indeed, compared to what we suffer through those we love. Think what you have driven me to when I am compelled to say, I trust it was momentary madness that prompted you to make that speech. But," continued she, bending on her own knees, and drawing him down on his, "it is not my pardon you must ask, my own beloved Charles!"

When Montfort had prayed to be forgiven with that upon his cheek which shamed his manhood,

he said, "You need not dread this feeling in me again; and your entreaties have only produced sooner what my own thoughts would inevitably have produced at last. But it is no sin for me to say, the knowledge of the misery it would cause you is an additional motive with me never to repeat this offence. No, my own! it is no sin to frankly acknowledge a motive which He who is all mercy may have given me in pity for my weakness. Set your mind at peace, my beloved girl! do not fear for the future! oh, I *will* bear to see you die without one murmur more. But give me all the support you can; and I only ask that which I will give to you."

Maria threw her arms about his neck, and hung upon his bosom: "Oh, you are all my own again." She seemed impelled by a power which she could not resist—nor did she seek to resist it—she pressed a kiss upon his lips, which was once returned, and no more—one pressure to his heart, and she had left him—had left him a better and a less unhappy man than she had found him.

Nor, when they were again together had their calmness forsaken them. No blush spread over Maria's face at the thoughts of their last parting; but she met Montfort's eyes with all her former confidence, as she said, "Did you think me unforgiving and severe when I said, I hoped you had erred from madness?—because I must ask your forgiveness now, if you did!"

"I thought it the kindest speech you could have made to me, and proceeding from the deepest, purest love."

"Now I am resigned to our fate indeed!"

Maria's thankfulness can hardly be judged of by what has just been mentioned, or even by her conduct on the occasion, for the dread of the effect the certain knowledge that she was sinking into the grave would have on her lover's mind, had long weighed upon her. She had before remarked, that the only case in which she could trace one feeling she would not have wished him to possess, was where her happiness was concerned; and knowing the strength of his character for good, she feared

[redacted]



to combat the idea of the certainty of their deaths, which had taken such complete possession of Maria's mind. At first he did try to cheer her with hopes which he had long ceased to have, but he soon felt the attempt to be so vain that it seemed almost like a mockery.

"Charles! Why tell me what you do not believe yourself? Perhaps if I thought it possible to deceive you into hope, I might attempt it too; but I know that it is in vain; and it is equally vain with me. Look at that, Charles! and look at this!" said she, with a sad smile, holding out a hand which could almost be seen through, and pointing to a cheek that, as it became paler, became lovelier—but less the loveliness of earth than heaven. "Do these deceive?—are they to get better or worse? And do you think I am so much afraid to die? Do you feel we have so much to lose in life that we should regret the leaving of it? Oh, Charles!—my father! my father! but for him, why should I wish to live?"

After this Montfort sought no more to deceive her; but from the moment she had brought him to a just sense of the resignation that was demanded of them, he used every endeavour to strengthen her heavenly hopes, and lighten her earthly dread at the thoughts of the gloomy passage of the tomb: from this noble-minded creature, however, he always declared he received infinitely more support than he afforded.



CHAPTER II.

"Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?"
MILTON.

AND now so perfectly were both the lovers given up to the idea of death, that often when they had not previously been speaking of it, they would allude to it as a thing that was surely to come, and to come quickly. "Who will take care of our dear, dear Li, when we are all gone? for my father will not long remain behind us!" said Maria, one day, when they were walking, and Li was playing before them, tossing up the dead leaves in the air.

"Poor, poor Li!—how he will miss us!—only fancy him howling over our grave." And this idea did that which the thoughts of their own deaths had almost ceased to do. The fountains of her eyes were nearly dried up; but this made her burst out crying like a child. "But he shall be buried at our feet at last, my beloved girl!" said Montfort, pressing her withering hand to his heart, "And I have a fancy that he too will not long survive us."

The wretched father saw that both were sinking in spite of all their endeavours to conceal it. One evening he was particularly struck with his daughter's appearance. "My unhappy child," said he, "how can I make you less wretched?"

"Why will my father think me unhappy?" replied Maria, with a smile that would almost have deceived another person.

"Maria, my ill-fated girl! a father is not to be deceived where an only child's peace is concerned. And here," continued he, seeing Montfort approach, "comes one who tries the same vain task;

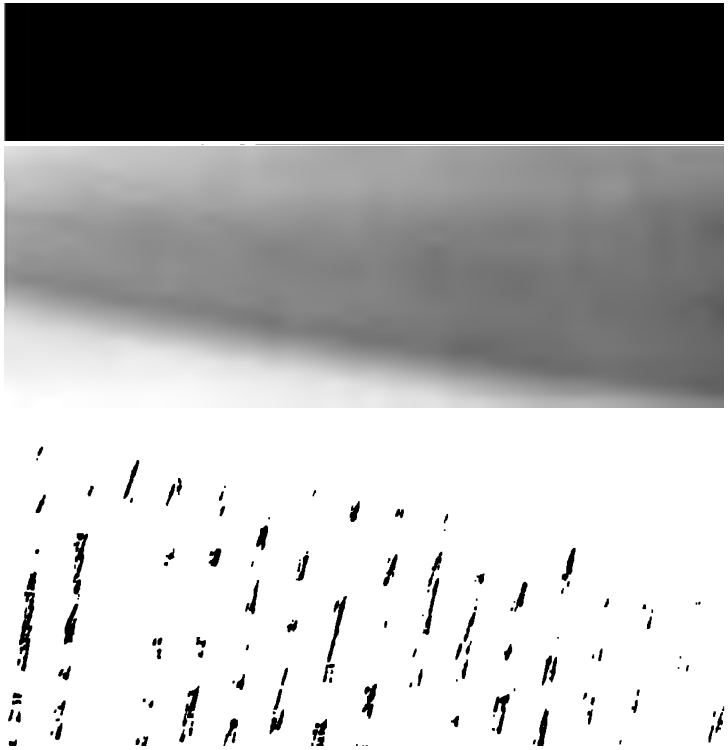
but it will not do—it will not do. You cannot blind me, even though your goodness should make you blind yourselves. Your pale face and fevered hand, Maria, and his gloomy spirits, tell me the truth,—that you are both sinking beneath your situation."

They in vain tried to re-assure him, and talked with an assumed cheerfulness which contrasted sadly with their real feelings; but this affected the Emperor more than their tears would have done. "Oh, do not try to outrage nature any more for my sake! 'Tis as if the dead should smile. Have you courage to make one trial more —one more sacrifice—the greatest and the last?"

"Could we, Charles, refuse any thing to such a father?"

"Nothing, indeed!"

"My beloved children, I see you sinking daily, now you are together! Do you dare, for my sake, to part? I have only this one hope left, that travelling and change of scenes may restore you both when you are not together."



they should share each other's grave—before they should be united in that land where the laws of man do not reach to trouble, and "the weary are at rest."

They wished to have parted when the Emperor was not present, but this they could not do without giving him reason to think it cost them more than they desired he should suppose. Maria had previously said to Montfort, "Now I must rely upon your strength, and it must not fail me, my own Charles. I must rely that you are able to part from me at any moment; and when I feel myself best equal to it, I will give you a sign, and then leave us at once. Do not think, from my making this preparation, that I shall suffer much —no, I mean to part from you as calmly as I now talk to you about it. And why should we not do so? If we knew we were to meet again in a short time in this world, we should think little of it. Then should it distress us more that our meeting is to be in a better?"

"Maria, you may trust me—I will not fail

you. At the moment I take you in my arms for the last time in this life, I will think, yet a few short hours, and you will be there for ever."

The Emperor had been anxious that Montfort should take an old and valued friend with him as a companion, but in this he was not supported by Maria. She said, "Do not, I entreat, press that point. By looking into my own heart, I can well tell what passes in his; and for me to have any companion in the world but you, would be torture."

"But I do not ask him to take a mere companion—I ask him to take his very oldest friend."

"That is true; but we know that friend from



he would place my dying Charles' head upon his bosom if he thought it would give one moment's ease; but still he is not the person to be with him now. Now, he could only bear the constant companionship of a woman, or of a man of a most yielding, feminine nature, or of one connected with me; and his friend is none of these. I may not have explained my meaning well, but trust to my feelings in this, for I know they do not deceive me."

The Emperor therefore ceased to urge the point, and it was at first decided that he was to go alone; but although Maria had thought, and argued rightly, she had come to a wrong conclusion, for the friend she spoke of was himself greatly changed; and soon their decision was altered, as far as Montfort would allow of, with Maria's full consent.

As I like to set the male creature in a good light when I can do so with any degree of conscience, I shall give the letter of that friend, which caused this alteration.

"You have forgotten me. Nevertheless, I am your oldest friend. You have become great—I remain comparatively little. Then why have I not more pride than to put you in mind that such a one exists? Because I know you! because I know this of you—that could you have been of any service to me, months would not have passed without my hearing from you—that had I wanted you at my side, there you would have been found. But still, although I knew all this, I did think it extraordinary, I should not receive one single letter from you. Now, alas! that silence is too sadly accounted for—you have been absorbed in that feeling which should absorb, or it is worthless. Had you thought more of me then, I should have thought less of you now. I know I was not out of your heart, but your mind was, as it should have been, filled with another. You had, like Columbus, discovered a new world—the world of love; and although it did not make you regard less those you had left in the old, yet the delight and novelty of all around withdrew your mind

from them for a time. And, oh, my poor friend! not more mighty were the ills that fatal discovery inflicted on the unoffending savages, than those which have fallen on you, and on her you love better than yourself. What shall I say to comfort you? what shall I do to help you? Freely may I now speak to you on the subject, for it is known to all; and if the public feeling most pities her on whom you would wish that all good things were showered, scarcely less is it lavished on you—on you, her protector, her restorer. From the palace to the cottage there is hardly less grief for you, than for her our loved and lovely Queen, whom her rank could not save from the same ills that may affect the poor peasant-girl—the young high being whom Envy herself would weep to see thus reduced by suffering to our own level.

"We were too proud of her: we thought, that only the greatest prince on earth, if he were good as great, could deserve her; and now we are punished for our pride: for when our minds became less worldly, and we felt that nothing but the

greatness which is conferred by the hand of God—goodness, could merit her, and found such merit, it was in one where the laws of man came in to blast our happiness, and her's.

"And this merit, and this misery, were found in my earliest friend! What a strange fate must his be, when it is the chief wonder of mine to have had such a friend!

"Oh, Montfort! yours was a fearful destiny—to be the greatest, or not to be!—and it was thrust on one who sought it not, for your ambition (I know it well) aimed not to the being great and powerful, but to the gaining admiration and love by doing brilliant and noble acts. That these have been gained, a nation's praises, a nation's blessings show: but have you gained happiness? alas! a nation's tears deny it! No, my poor friend has gone along a path which it was wise to choose, and honourable to pursue, and he has trodden it as none else could have done; yet it has been fatal to him.

"I began to write, thinking solely of your feel-

ings, but now I seem unmindful of them, and only give way to my own.

"Montfort! I am your oldest friend. You have never ceased to love me, and you never will; but, with all my confidence in you, I am jealous as a woman, and require to have your love shown. Yet is known you are to part. Let me go with you. I do not ask it in the vain hope that I can in any degree supply what you lose. I ask it for a much more humble reason; that I may watch over you, and at least keep from you all petty, worldly troubles, which in your state of mind would be torture. You must have some one near you to do this, and you could bear me better than any other.

"Perhaps you will think, from what you knew of my mind and feelings, that I am not the person who should be with you in such distress as this. Possibly I am not: but I am much changed from what I was not many months ago; and from exactly an opposite cause to that which has had such an influence on your life. Montfort, a friend may say it to a friend! I gave a faith as

pure, a soul as high, a heart as single, as your own, to one who seemed to have every virtue under Heaven. All of good I had to give, I gave to her. It was given to the pitiless winds; it was given to the raging sea; or to one who is more remorseless still.

"Do not think so meanly of me, as to suppose that wounded vanity may have made me see through a darkened glass that which perhaps is really fair, for my vanity has not been wounded: she of whom I speak, gave me all the heart she had to give: but what a thing did I find it! How deeply did it brand with falsehood the resplendent beauty which veils it from the view of others?



"I tell you of all this now, to prove that you can be of more service to your friend, if you will let him go with you, than he can be to you. You shall talk to him of one so opposite to this, that he will scarce believe such a contrast can exist in the same world. You shall paint her whom you love, such as she is, for better you cannot paint her; and you shall let him love her too, and it will restore to him that confidence which, if not lost for ever, at least is wavering.

"And I shall be able to enter into your feelings more than you expect, for though still as much a personal stranger to her from whom you part, as when, in our boyish sports, we used to cry, 'Now, charge for the honour of the babe Queen!' Nevertheless do I know her well—well do I know what she must be who has filled your heart and soul so entirely.

"How irresistibly does what I have just written carry my mind back against the stream of time! There you are, under the gnarled oak, your bonnet in your hand, your brown hair blowing

back, your eyes all fire, a glow upon your youthful cheek; you rush at the head of your wild gang to rescue the royal infant from her fancied ravishers. Think of this—think of what has happened. How did our idle play, faintly, but truly, body forth a reality! Little do they know of man's history who are forced to go to enchantment for a wondrous tale! That you have rescued her, is true: but where are my poor boy's eyes of fire—his glowing cheeks?

"Montfort! under that oak, one summer's eve, the moon just rising behind the old ivied tower you know so well, you said to me, 'Our fathers, who have been in the world, tell us that the world is always changing; I don't know how it should be, for they have never changed to each other; but, be this as it may, let you and I never alter. If prosperity and different pursuits should separate us, let us always be found together should either be in adversity.' Montfort! I had forgotten this for years; and so had you, I know, for I do not think we ever spoke of it afterwards; but no sooner did I hear of your cruel fate, than

all the circumstances came back to my mind as freshly as if they had that moment taken place, and nothing can drive them from thence. The instant I am alone; nay, if I but shut my eyes in company, I hear the owl hoot from the old tower—I see the shadows of its tottering walls thrown out in the moonlight—the breeze whispers in the leaves of the oak, and blows upon my cheek; and the accents of my friend come to my ears; but, oh! their sound is hollow now!

"Montfort! do not call me superstitious; but if I go not with you, I shall think we have disregarded a voice from another world."

The answer to this letter will best show what was finally determined on.

"You have explained exactly my feelings towards you; yet, although I know this to be the truth, I hardly think I should have ventured to have told you so after my seeming neglect.

"I cannot bear you with me, and I cannot bear

to be without you. But what can I bear? Yes, I can bear to die! for then we shall never part again. And what has taught your strong-minded friend (as you often called him) this stern lesson? Not his own reflections, not his philosophy, but a poor weak girl.

"That I die for her, I know; but still, what do I not owe her! I am afraid to attempt to say, lest I should appear to confound the creature with that Being compared to whom the best are but as dust—lest I should confound in words, ideas, which, in my mind, are as clear as they should be.

"And what does she owe me? Death, and nothing else, for there was nothing that I could

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"I cannot bear you with me, and I cannot bear

only one living thing near us, and that was a bird of ill omen. Ernest! did its boding voice tell truth?

"You bid me not to call you superstitious. Am I likely to do so, when my present feeling prompts me to beg you not to hope that I may live? How do I know what effect the wishes of a good man may have? and he who most regards my peace should not seek to prolong my wretchedness.

"Go to ——. There I will write to you again, and try to think more of you and less of myself; but, at present, it is in vain."

When the hour of parting at length came, Montfort had sent on his carriage and suite—all except one horse. He talked to Maria, and she replied in a way that would have astonished one who did not know the source of their calmness. In them, the human feeling, if I may so express it, was so much deadened and overcome by the train of thoughts which had so long occupied their minds, that the father not only seemed to be, but really

was, more affected at the parting than they were. When at length Montfort saw Maria's lips moving, and her eyes cast up to Heaven, he required no other sign. He wrung the Emperor's hand in silence. The father clasped both his children to his breast, and then pressed them into each other's arms. Maria did not affect to shrink from Montfort, but hugged him to her bosom with all her might; nor did her sweet lips turn from his: "Death hallows it," thought she. She hung upon his neck a moment longer: "Now go!" she whispered—one kiss more—Maria smiled upon him, and Montfort found himself on his horse, galloping as though he flew from those he hated. But that smile was one he never wished to see again, and did not like to think upon. Oh! it startled the heart far more than a cry of agony would have done.

Fast as Montfort flew away, there was something in his path to stop him. He had previously taken leave of Lion, and they had shut him up in Maria's apartments. The animal seemed clearly to

understand the meaning of his caresses, and, as soon as he was left alone, had broken out of his confinement, and now overtook Montfort just as the latter got out of sight of the villa. Montfort stopped the moment he saw him; jumped off his horse, and, as he again caressed him, said, "Oh, Li, you must go back and take care of *her!*" The dog ran a short way towards home, sat down, and looked back at Montfort, and howled. Montfort again jumped upon his horse, and hurried forward; but as he did so, he thought of the picture Maria's fancy had once drawn, and said, "That howl is perhaps only a little before its time."

Maria had not prayed in vain for the moment

Maria's conduct astonished her father: "My child," he said, "I did not think this had been in the power of woman, not even after knowing all your mother's strength of mind. But I believe I would rather see you show that you suffered more, for I dread the ending of this unnatural calm."

"It is not my own strength, father, I know! but let us rely on Him who giveth it."—"Strength?" continued she to herself. "Oh, no! 'Tis a coward's courage—the calm of desperation. But for the hope, the sad hope I live on, and soon shall die on, I feel I could not have borne this. I should have sunk beneath it at once."

As they drove along by the fierce D——, in the moonlight, Maria sat leaning her head against the side of the carriage. Her father and Lion only were with her, their suite following them in other conveyances. She looked out upon the river with its bright foaming little falls dancing and glittering in the magic light; and as the fairy scene glanced by, she could almost fancy she had passed away from that world where she had suffered so

[redacted] sunshine [redacted] alone, [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

had got Maria to make him promise to comply with his desire. He scarcely doubted his own wishes being obeyed, but Maria's he knew would be.

CHAPTER III.

" Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of nature.

But thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever,
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like heaven; and to seem such to me
Even now what wants thy stream?—that it should

entered with a listless confidence, when we are much absorbed in other matters. It is the difference between going into a magnificent room we may be accustomed to, and the paltry one of an inn in which we have never before been: in the latter, without knowing why, our attention is so far roused, that we look round, although we do not expect to see any thing worth seeing.

The second day after they had parted, Montfort wrote to Maria; and the following is a part of his letter:—

"Had I not solemnly pledged myself to tell you my every thought and feeling, I should still have done so, for I know in it is my only safety. Were I to attempt to act otherwise, you would see through my purpose at once, and then would you unceasingly torment yourself in imagining what does not exist, because you were not told of what does exist. Nor will the plain and naked truth add to your grief; for if you will see a sorrow in my heart that no human being can bear and live long, that you already know is there; and, to com

[redacted] you will find, I trust, that not one trace remains of the feeling which once cast at my feet a being so exalted by her goodness.

"Of our sufferings at parting I do not speak, because I cannot describe them. Oh, Maria! if I die not, in dying first, give you one additional pang, with how much less dread shall I look forward to the separating of soul and body, than I should to such another parting! Yet, even there I had one consolation which she who deserved it far better, had not: I felt, that by my conduct then, I was supporting her whom I had vowed to support for ever: this thought seemed to lift me

[redacted]

this, I should prefer to keep my weakened and feverish frame from repose, until compelled to it by necessity: but, no! when the blow falls upon us, we must be found, with heads bowed down, and arms folded;—not rushing forward to meet it. May He, in whose bosom my Maria soon will be, watch over her to-night and for ever!"

I proceed to give parts of other letters, without being scrupulous as to order of time or place.

"I had before been in Dauphiny, although, I believe, I told your father that I had not. From thence I first saw the Alps. I well remember my impatience when light began to dawn; (only think, Maria! there was once a time when I longed for day!) the cold morning air upon my cheek seemed to fan the mounting spirit within, and make it more strong and vehement: my soul was like a restrained hawk which its jesses can hardly hold; and when the first ray caught a snowy peak, away it swept through the air to hover over

it; and the day came on so fast, that almost instantly it was lost amidst the wonders of a first morning among the glories of the Alps.

"But even from this splendid magnificence I was occasionally recalled by the extreme loveliness of that which was immediately around me. The country was like a noble park; hills crowned with very large trees, and long retiring glades between, whose carpet was the freshest, brightest grass, mingled with innumerable flowers. With such a back-ground as the Alps, and most favourable lights, this made a scene which years have hardly dimmed in my recollection. It was as if Nature, to convince an unbeliever in her powers, had displayed them all at once: all was laid out, from the grandest of her works,—her mountains, her forests, and her snows, to her loveliest,—her flowers: of her seasons, too, she was equally lavish, for there was each gradation from youthful spring to hoary winter.

"Maria, this was! What is? Perhaps to teach a lesson, which is not lost on me I trust, and shall

e on her who must partake every alleviation
ur fate or it is no alleviation, the earth has
ed herself in her wintry robes earlier here
in other places. When I again passed the
try which had so delighted me before, the
were leafless, the grass was withered, the
ers were dead; but there, unchanged, were
glorious Alps before me, like that bright land
which we are journeying. The green leaves,
flowers of this life, however worthy of the
nd that gives them, are not meant to endure;
hilst there is a place of 'joy that fadeth not
way,' where time and seasons work no change;
—the same, whether it be seen with the dancing
eyes of hope, or through the tears of sorrow;
—whether it be entered by the bridal chamber, or
through the gates of affliction.

* * * * * *

"I this day came to a little hollow in the mountains,—a nameless spot, and this was its greatest charm to me; a name would have destroyed it: none knew of it except the mountain-goat, and his equally unobserving goatherd: it seemed a spot

forgotten of the world, and to forget the world in: I could fancy written over it, 'Man may enter, but sorrow must not.' It did not run far back; there was no mystery in it,—nothing to lead the fancy on; you saw its end: but, for that reason, it looked like a home, for home is a place of rest, not of excitement. It was bounded by rocks, but had a soft look compared to the objects around it: a green sward covered it, and three or four trees gave it shade enough, but not too much; the sunbeams could play freely upon its banks, and if they were occasionally chequered by the boughs, it only made 'grateful vicissitude.'

"Not daring to intrude on the sacred spot over which my exclusion seemed written, I lay at the entrance like one destined to see, but never to enjoy, a land of promise. There, on the most inviting bank, a cottage rose to my mind's eye, and Maria was at the door watching my return: and when at length I came, she—but not before she had been in my arms—chid me for being away so long, and said, 'If you desert your poor girl thus, you will make her a huntress too, and then

you will never have the satisfaction of being one single hour alone.'

"'The satisfaction of being away from Maria! and is it so she means to punish me?'

"'Why?' replied Maria, as she hung back on the arm that had been thrown round her waist, smiling in my face in the confidence of her own power, 'would it not be a punishment?'

"'Ay, Maria! such a punishment as would make me commit the crime for the sake of receiving it.'

"'Oh! but if that is true, why have you been away from me so long now?'

"As I was going to relate all my adventures, a shrill scream broke the vision; the cottage, and she who was its light, had gone, and, in place of so much that spoke of happiness, there was a solitary wretch whose tears alone prevented his looking still as the cold, hard rock on which he lay—an eagle flapping his wings a few yards above him, as if in contempt of that which had lost the spirit and energy of man.

"And why should the eagle's scream have power to scare away this bliss? Why should it exist only in fancy? Why should we not 'flee away' from that society which has condemned us to death for no crime, and seek the happiness from nature which man denies us? We could be happy in such a place; we know we could, for we have been so:—oh, how happy! It is no new thing for Maria to be my housewife, nor for me to provide her with food! and what do we want more? Would not these give us all we ever wished for in life—give us each other? If we were happy under such circumstances before, when we loved indeed, but had not told each other of our love—and when, therefore, our feelings were too tumultuous and uncertain not to cause anxiety and pain, what should we not be if, in such a spot, doubts were at an end, and hopes confirmed?—when the wife and husband would be sure to find, wherever they might wander, peace in each other's bosom, and a home in each other's arms?

"And now Maria blushes, with more of human

feeling than might be supposed left in one so spiritualised—and now should I, but for my sacred promise not to conceal one single thought or feeling from her, reproach myself with having brought upon the pale cheek of sorrow that which only becomes the sunny face of joy! with having called back, for a moment, that spirit to earth, which was far on its way to heaven!

"And why should I ask Maria that which I can too sadly answer?—why demand what link binds us to man, when I too surely know it is one that cannot be broken? To thy father we are bound more than ever were children before, because we owe more to his love. Once I might have said, 'Is it not hard, that we can only repay one who seems to live but for us, by dying for him?' but not now. Now, I feel I can expiate at any sacrifice what he has borne for us—can bind my beautiful lamb to the horns of the altar, without one rebel thought. Yes! my Jephtha's daughter not only lays down her life for her father willingly, but with her lover's free consent. Maria, I repeat

this truth to you very often, but I well know how much you delight to hear it.

"The sun is going down, and the flowers around me are going to sleep; and soon will go to sleep a being as sweet and innocent as they:—but alas! in spite of beauty, in spite of innocence, there are flowers that go to sleep with a tear in the eye.

"My own Maria!"

Before Maria received the letters of which I have given parts, she had written Montfort several times, but I do not give extracts from any of them. From ———, which they reached as

father's goodness to me, and hear him talk of yourself!—but why seek to make you love him more?—it will not add to your happiness now!

"You know it was not alone a selfish regard for my own feelings, that made me so much dread parting with you for the short time we have to be apart; you know the objection, in comparison with which all others were as nothing, proceeded from a fear that you might require my weak help near you to keep you prepared to die: but, praise be to Him who giveth peace to the troubled soul, as well as every other good gift, your letter has perfectly removed that greatest of all fears from my mind. It shows how truly you keep the promise you once made, that you will "bear to see me die without one murmur more." May Heaven bless you for it! you have indeed lightened the burthen of the heart you love so well. Now does that heart tell me, and tell me truly, that it has not given up too much for you—no, not in giving up all its earthly happiness.

"I am sitting alone at a window that looks out

upon the Rhine, and I cannot bear to be out of sight of it; but I am almost ashamed to tell even you the reason. It is not, as we once should have done, to admire it bearing along in irresistible might and majesty: one of Nature's most impressive works disappears to me as such, and I only see in it a chain that binds me to you:—you have been upon its banks since last we met; with what thoughts I well know; and for that alone I love it now.

"At the first moment we came in sight of this river, how instantly did the many hundred miles between us disappear! I was beside you,—I was speaking to you,—I was in your arms: I felt your burning tears upon my cheek;—nor was it until my father's startled looks recalled me to myself that I knew them to be only my own.

"Fancy in her wildest flight would hardly imagine what the feelings will seize upon. The moment I awake, I get out of bed and go to the window, to see which way the clouds are flying. If from the direction of Switzerland, I think, if one

of the thousand wanderers athwart the face of Heaven may not have thrown its shadow upon you.

"Charles! I tell you of all the weaknesses the love I bear you makes me guilty; but when you think of them, think also that this is the thing for which I die.

"I conceal nothing from you, for to feel, and to tell you my feelings, seems to me the same thing; and my doing so shows that the confidence I profess to have in your resignation is real; for, had I one single earthly doubt of it, should I do thus? No! however vain, I should cling to deception, as a drowning wretch would cling to a single hair.

"This is a lovely land. If my wearied head is to sink to its last sleep upon your bosom, all places will be alike to me; but if not, it is amidst so much beauty that I would die, because it speaks so forcibly of the goodness and bounty of the Creator. Can He who cares so much for us here, cease all at once to care for us hereafter?

"The other day, as I was sitting in the shade, I overheard a young girl say, 'If I were only as happy as the Young Queen must be!' For a moment I longed to show her my heart, and ask her, if that was happiness? but I quickly checked the wish as a cruel one,—for why seek to make others know there is less happiness in the world than they imagine? I should not have thanked any one who had done so to me twelve months ago.

"But how did I check the wish? did I say, 'It is wrong, therefore I must not wish it?' No! but I said, 'I must not wish it, because Charles would think it wrong!' Oh, Charles! is this not carrying love to a sinful length?—is it not setting up an idol in place of the True God? And then I cried, and prayed the Being whom I seemed to have offended, that He would not let thee stand between Him and His erring creature. And then I almost smiled that I should think thou couldst possibly do that—thou, who hast made me love Him more than I had ever grace to do before!

"I have another motive, besides those I have mentioned, for telling you all my weaknesses. They will not make you love me less, and I think they may give you strength, for I know you will try to correct them, and in so doing may correct your own.

"You may think it strange that I have not in my former letters praised your conduct at our parting; but it is not such conduct that astonishes a woman most; for, with all her weakness, she feels that she is capable of something like it.

"I cannot but believe Lion knows I am ill and unhappy. He now never leaves me, although you recollect how fond he used to be of running about playing with the pages. I showed him your dress the other day, but I will never do so again: he betrayed the utmost delight, and seemed to think you must be near; but when he found you did not come, he looked so disappointed, that it went to my heart to think of the pain I had given him.

"Why should you blame yourself for picturing

forth to me a happiness which never is to be? Do you not know that such thoughts must often be in my own mind; and should I not just as well know they were in yours, even if you did not speak of them? Yes, the human mind, when in the extreme of misery, if it can so far exert itself, naturally flies off towards the extreme of happiness: it is as natural for us, when separated from each other for ever, to think of being each other's for ever, as for the starving wretch to have visions of banquets, or the dweller in the dungeon to bound over trackless deserts: and this tendency continues even where no hope is left, just as the waves roll on after the winds have ceased.

"Besides, my Charles tells perfect truth, when he says, that, independent of our promise, our only safety consists in showing each other every thought and feeling, for we could not deceive each other if we would. To those, between whom ordinary feelings exist, there may be concealment; but we have passed far beyond that point: our souls

seem, as it were, to stand in the presence of each other, even in this world; for them there is no deception—no disguise left:—how thankful, then, ought we to be that they need none!"

MONTFORT TO MARIA.

"I almost reproach myself for not having yet sent for our dear friend Ernest (I call him our's although Maria does not know him). It seems to me, that the love which hovers round me so touchingly, should not be thus treated: but how can I bear even his company?—Tell me what I am to do, for if I feel that I am obeying Maria, I shall have courage to attempt any thing. He is never far from me; but, you know, is under a promise not to come to me until I request him. Poor Ernest! if his tale be true, (and that he thinks it true, I know—and how he can be mistaken, I do not see,) has been cruelly deceived, perhaps rather '*in*' one, than '*by*' one, on whom he would rashly have staked his happiness without really knowing her. Whether the principal deceit

was in his own fancy, or in her conduct, the effect on him is the same; and my friend must feel as felt the dying Brutus, when he exclaimed, in bitterness of heart, 'Oh, virtue, have I followed thee all my life long, and do I find thee at last to be nothing but a dream?' for, in his mind and heart, woman and virtue have, until now, always been the same, and he has been their steady worshipper.

"It is in vain, in such a case, we may assent to the argument, that one example does not prove all to be bad,—that one fallen angel does not show others to be less pure: our feelings, where they have been staked deeply, and injured greatly, will not be thus reasoned with: they have no philosophy in them; they cannot be put to silence by a cold proposition, however logically laid down or eloquently advocated: time, and examples of an opposite nature, are the only arguments to convince them of their mistake. Then ought I, Maria, to refuse to have him near me, and to talk of you?

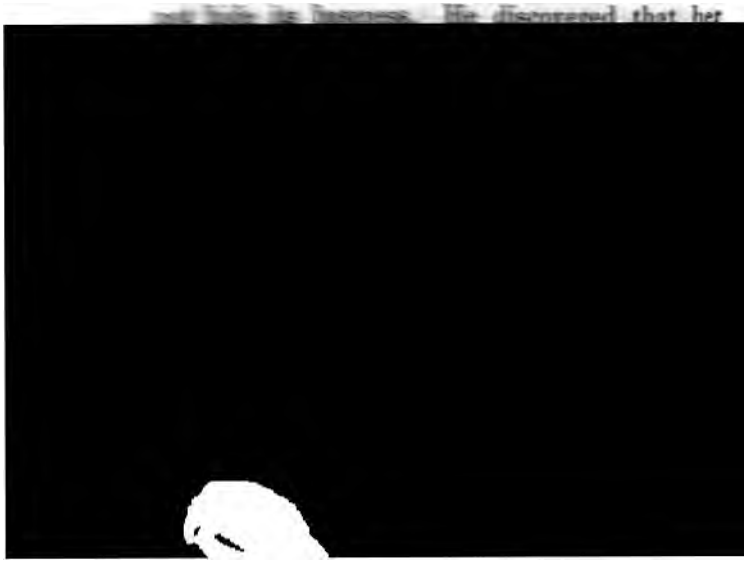


"There is another cause, too, which must make my friend unhappy. He is placed in a position in which nature was far from ever intending him to be placed—as it were, in opposition to your sex. Should I not try to heal this wound also? should I not try, by showing him Maria's worth, to make him forget another's want of worth? You know, Maria, I have often told you that I do not think you are better than many others of your sex: but I cannot conceive it possible for there to be a single being upon earth more calculated to reconcile to that sex one who has been offended by it.

"He writes to me daily, and seeks to draw me from my griefs by interesting me in his. Maria's own feelings will tell her if it is possible to succeed in his first object; in his second, it was very easy, for it would show great selfishness to disregard the worldly interest of our friends, merely because we have ceased to have any of our own. Far be this from the heart that loves Maria; far be it from her own heart! No! my dying, my beautiful girl! we must go out of this world, not only with

me and a look at our souls, but with kindly

[redacted] me more plain to point out to me [redacted] story is, because I used to admire him at [redacted]. He was introduced, in the [redacted] way, to a girl whose tall and [redacted] figure, united to surpassing beauty of [redacted] seemed to indicate a high and generous soul. Her manner was captivating, and her disposition [redacted]. My frank-hearted friend [redacted] me at once: but, for the perhaps rough, though surely [redacted] qualities are of his affections, he received a [redacted] thing, whose glitter could [redacted] his [redacted]. He discovered that her



that had been so insidiously aimed at him, although it missed to fix its poison in his heart, gave a wound elsewhere, which rankled, and still rankles. The very foundation of his confidence in woman's goodness, on which the fabric of his hopes was built, now lies a ruin.

"Knowing the misery this must give poor Ernest, I would have tried to excuse, in some degree, the conduct he complained of, and so lessened his resentment; but how could I uphold a cold selfishness in one at that age, when an imprudent disregard of self, however unwise, is never ungraceful? but its reverse, if not a crime, is, at least, the most unamiable of feelings? No, Maria, it was not for me to do this thing, even for such an object as a friend's peace of mind. My conscience would not permit me to attempt to countenance the opposite of that generous rashness which I have seen so beautifully, though so sadly, exemplified in you. I had worshipped perfect disinterestedness too truly to allow of this.

"After speaking of conduct which could not but

be condemned by even the most partial judge, he says:—

"'And do outraged feelings urge me, and do truth and justice permit me, to give such a character as this to her of whom I once thought far differently? Oh, Montfort! has not my confidence (if there can be such a right) a right to be shocked? Must it not have been unnatural—possessed of more than human endurance—if it had stood this uninjured? May I not well tremble to think of it? Do you not tremble? No, you do not; but it is because you have met with one who has thrown her own faith and truth before you as a shield, to keep you from all suspicions of her sex;—because you have, in your heart, and round your heart, one who has proved her worth more clearly still than this has proved its vileness—one who has sanctified that heart with her presence, and made it like the Holy of Holies, into which no unholy thing may enter.'

"Maria! until I read this, I thought I could not love our friend better!

"But do not think, from what you knew of me before, that I expected to find too many excellences: on the contrary, her outward attractions were far greater than I used to imagine in my most glowing fancies; and all I asked for more were, indeed, humble things—a little common honesty, and a little of that warmth of feelings, which, whether well or ill directed, almost all her sex possess. I found the reverse of these, and I am free.

"'Yet, 'tis a bitter freedom—a dearly purchased liberty! Better be a slave at the oar of a galley that hath a determined course, than lord of a bark driven wildly over the ocean without a single home left whereat to point its prow. Montfort, there are ties that may be death to us; but better those, my friend, than to be cast loose from all ties. You have suffered, and do suffer, griefs, in comparison with which the world would think mine light indeed; but you have escaped, and will for ever escape, one moment which is never to be thought of without the heart's

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

his imagination back again upon his feelings, until the reciprocal excitement had made him produce a picture which was not the truth, only because it was more than the truth. Feelings that will not, that cannot, be quiet, start away like the Italian race-horse, and imagination is the pointed ball hanging on his flank—motion produces pain, and pain produces fresh motion, until he flies at his utmost speed, and is only stopped by the ending of his course or from sheer exhaustion.

"But if this ardent mind may add shades to the darkness of vice, it usually has the generosity to make fair, with yet more exaggeration, whatever it can discover of good. So was it with my friend when he spoke of me; but Maria will tell me in vain, that so was it when he spoke of one other—there, even his excited fancy was defied, and could not exaggerate.

"To perceive more clearly what I mean, mark Ernest's altered style when he wrote me on the following day, after this self-kindled fire was gone.

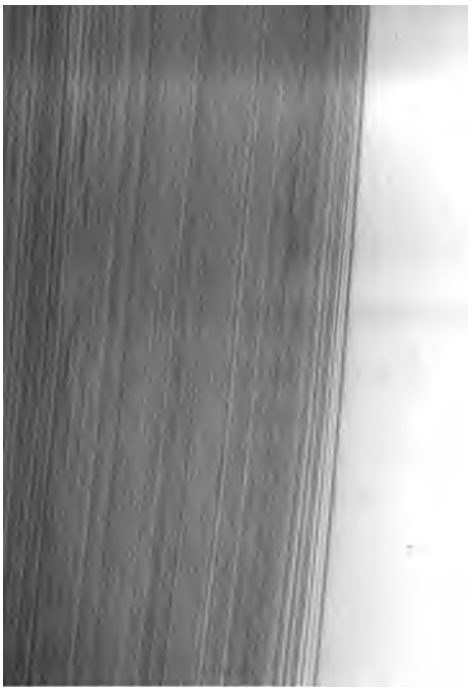
"'That she wilfully deceived me, I know; but I must not deny that I wilfully deceived myself; and it is mortifying to be forced to own, that I now find fault with her, rather because she is not, and cannot be, what I thought she was, than for any part of her conduct which she had the power to make different from what it was. And then I try to argue myself into the belief, that it is wrong to blame her for this, as she could not possibly alter her nature; but back comes the recollection, that she knew, perfectly well knew, at the very moment she held out every encouragement to me, she was, in respect to our feelings, giving back chaff for grain.

"'Solitude has now somewhat purified my spirit, but indeed it is not yet as it used to be—far, far from what it should be: if it calms my feelings, it does not alter their tone; and now, when they have been much roused, do we see through them, and through them alone. Even here, amidst the Alps, I only observe what enters into them. Of the mountain, I see but the sun-

beam on its snowy top, which makes a thing as cold, look almost as glowing and as pure as she. The smoothness of the stilled lake, to me, is only her treachery hid beneath her beauty. The loveliest vallies are un-noted; but if a ravaging storm sweeps across them, I think of her smile, which, like the lightning, blasteth where it playeth.'

"Thus, Montfort! solitude cannot cure me: but my friend might. Will he not try?

"And now, Maria, have I written page on page with hardly one word of thee. And now might any other suppose that Ernest's holy wile had been successful. But would he think so if he saw my haggard face, and felt my feverish hand? I often sit before a glass and mark the changes that have taken place since we parted, for not only do they come on surely, but rapidly; and then I think, 'Is Maria thus altered? may not her gentler spirit, as it makes less resistance to her fate, enable her to bear it longer?' Make haste and die, my own! make haste and die! I would not



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to write, I do not, I need not, tell you. Obey but your own feelings on the subject, and it will be exactly what it ought to be.

"Will Maria think that I am what I ought to be, when I own I have one wrong thought respecting her? I do not cease to pray for her; but how often does the idea come into my mind, that she has less need of being prayed for than any other; for surely He who alone can protect, will protect and keep her who deserves it best! Shall not He, who is all mercy, compassionate her for whom all men even feel? Maria! it is touching to see the timid bird expose itself to danger, to lure the human brute from its nest. It is touching to see a weak mother dare extremities for her child, from which a bold man might shrink; yes! it is beautiful, and sublime as beautiful, to see those naturally so weak, thus raised above their nature. But who denies that it is still more touching to see a young and lovely girl going down to the grave with a broken heart, yet trying to hide her sufferings and to scatter that happiness around her

which her own bosom knoweth not? No! the heart of man is not insensible to this! then shall He who put those feelings in that heart disregard it?

"Maria, I seldom speak to you of your father but I often speak of him to One who is infinitely more pure and good than even thou art, my own Compared to whom thou art but as the dust of the earth, out of which He formed thee; but He endowed thee with a soul which is not of the dust and which shall go to Him from whom it came."



CHAPTER IV.

"And to this image, which methought did promise
Most venerable worth, did I devotion:
But, O, how vile an idol proves this god!"

SHAKSPEARE.

MARIA TO MONTFORT.

"Pray for me, my beloved Charles—pray for me! Oh! if you could see me the weak thing I am, would you not think I needed it? My mind is sometimes strangely unsettled, and often so by one wild thought, 'that if Charles sees me die with resignation, he will think I give him up too easily—will fancy I was naturally of a melancholy temperament, and therefore sought, was even glad to find, such a grief as this; yes, even to die on;—that I am consumed, rather by an inward feeling that was born with me, than for the

love of him:' and then do wicked thoughts strive to find entrance into my mind, and I only shut them out by being again upon my knees. I do not dare to be long from the presence of my God in prayer, or my courage sinks, or my mind gets tainted; and is this like one who does not need to be prayed for?

"If you overtake me in our race, you must run very fast. This morning I would not be supported into the room where my father was waiting, to spare him pain; and, in trying to enter alone, I nearly fell from weakness. In truth, I do not resist our hard fate less than you do: I do not bear it better in any one respect. What? I better than one who uncomplainingly resigns such capability of receiving happiness, and such powers of giving it?—one who, his own being gone, thinks still so fervently of the earthly happiness of those whom he loved, whilst he had yet hopes on the earth? No, my own! by the fruit, we are told, the tree is to be known; and it is beautiful to see your anxiety about your friend—beautiful! I do

not think I should have felt this interest so deeply as I do, had you not taught me to do so.

"Send for Ernest instantly. You shall not only give him a portion of those affections which now might well be supposed concentrated on self, and upon one other object dearer to you still; but you shall give him up a part of your time—yes, even a part of that time you would otherwise spend in thoughts of me. It is his wish, and you would have done it but for the sadness of your heart—it is my wish, and you will do it in spite of that sadness.

"Charles! you once asked me, if vanity ever dies. It is not dead with me yet; for I do feel flattered when you tell me, I may serve to restore, in a mind as noble as your own, that confidence which an unworthy one has injured: and it is in vain I say to myself, 'But this is only Charles's opinion,' for my feelings instantly reply, as they have often done before, 'And is not that the opinion of the whole world to me?'

"But I would fain persuade you, not to tell



Ernest only of what you have seen good in me, for if that alone is spoken of, and spoken of by you, your object may still be defeated, as it will be very possible for him to imagine that no other woman exists like me: but if you tell him the truth, tell him of my weaknesses, my follies; when he sees that one who is like a thousand others of her sex, can yet prove the truth of her love by dying for it, it will go far to cure him of a distrust of female faith.

"Oh, Charles! had you met with such a character as your poor friend has done, before I knew you, how might you not have doubted my first premeditated act? but, now, the knowledge



MONTFORT TO MARIA.

"It is a foolish thought, Maria! to imagine that under any circumstances I could ever have doubted your honesty of purpose. I may, myself, have argued against this before; but if so, I do not now believe my own argument. However suspicious a slippery world may make us, there are those whom we cannot, if we would, distrust—those to whom we give up our entire confidence, we hardly know why, on no better guarantee than a frank manner and an honest face. When nothing besides seems steadfast; when we know that quicksands and dangers are around us on every hand—still, from amidst the troubled waters, our be-tossed souls turn to them with undiminished trust, as to a beacon on a rock; so steady, and so guiding, did I hail thy light, the moment it appeared above my horizon: and although the storm came speedily on, and irresistibly,—though my bark is foundering, even now going down amidst the billows,—I know I have not been lured

[illegible] by a false flame. No! there [illegible] burns, and shall burn, throwing its saving rays [illegible] the "valley of the shadow of death."

"I did not read to the end of your letter before I sent for Ernest. I felt as if I should lose half the merit of obeying you, if I appeared, even to myself, to hesitate.

* * * *

"Eight hours have passed and I have not written you a single line; but Ernest is with me. He is much fatigued, and I have now sent him to bed, doubting, I should say, (if on such a subject I could laugh) that the very pillow he rests his head on may betray him before morning. And why

people—with them, it is for life; with me, for death.'

"'Then, surely you are not far from your hope! This tells a sad tale, Montfort,' said he, touching my cheek.

"'You heard it once before, Ernest!'

"'When?—where?—what do you mean?'—asked he, with a stare; but when I replied, with a laugh, 'Have you forgotten the story told us by the voice from the old tower?—only neither of us believed it then!' he turned away with almost a shudder, and exclaimed, 'Oh, Montfort! for God's sake do not talk and look thus, or you will drive me mad!' but quickly added, taking my hand, 'shall we not try to comfort each other, for, indeed, we have both much need of it?'

"'No, my dear Ernest! I have not; for I have a far better earthly comforter than I deserve. Would that you could see, and know her, and it would go far to remove from your bosom the only feeling I do not wish to be there.'

"'Oh, Montfort!' said he, replying to the

latter part of my speech, 'you do not know what I gave that girl.'

"'Yes, I do, Ernest; you gave her just such feelings as I gave Maria; and——'

"'And,' interrupted he, 'what would you now feel if you knew that you had given true fire, and only got back in return the phosphoric flame, which, although it shines as bright, does not possess one particle of heat?'

"There is a great difference in our situations. If it were possible for Maria now to become the exact opposite of what she is, it would end my earthly misery indeed, for I could not survive it: —we are bound together for good or for evil—but

"'Montfort, there you go too far—much too far. Those I before trusted, I trust as implicitly as ever: it is only, that when, in a new acquaintance, I see all that is pleasing and graceful, cast, as it were, merely to drape all that is noble and good, I think, so was she habited, but what did I find beneath?—the monstrous deformity, the unutterable horrors of the veiled false prophet of the East.'

"'But is this reasonable, Ernest?—might not a judge as well suspect all to be worthy of death because he is obliged to hang a few? Surely you cannot long retain what your judgment must condemn.'

"'It is very well, my friend, so to talk; but the wisest of us do not know what our feelings are until we try them:—we neither know the exact direction they will take, nor how far they will carry us; and you, Montfort, cannot now deny this, whatever you might have done once: yet, I own mine to be wrong; and I do, and shall, try to curb them; and may, perhaps, succeed at last.'

"Maria! I could not attempt to argue against

what he last said, and you feel I could not! but is it not sad to see thus changed one whom I knew a few years—nay, not very many months ago, all headlong and uncalculating confidence—one who cast his glove into the lists in defence of every appearance of goodness, as promptly and as frankly as would the most chivalrous knight of old for any show of innocence in distress? What has not that person whom I never have, and never will name to you, to answer for?

"But even here Maria saves me from myself—from my own good feelings; for well do I recollect her pointing out the danger and the sin of allowing them to hurry us too far; and therefore do I check myself, and, I trust, stop short of hate: and, in this instance, it is necessary to be particularly on my guard, for here the sin of hatred would wear an appearance of generosity, as it would not be for any injuries done to myself, but solely for those inflicted on another. Maria, should I have thought of this before I knew you?—you will tell me that I should, but I am willing to think that I should not.

"Nevertheless, Maria herself will not find fault with me for saying, that she of whom I write has to answer for the polluting of a most holy sacrifice, for a heart laid upon our altars, if not an offering to a God, is far greater—an offering from a God: he made it for us, and presented it to us: 'tis true he left us free to choose; but he did not leave us free to throw the oblation on the earth, to trample on it, and then cast it back to torture our votary—and, least of all, when we ourselves have woo'd that votary's approach.

"I soon found that one might as well attempt to reason with a person who is mad on one subject only, as to argue with Ernest—to which state his mind seems to come frightfully near—for when I thought I had made some impression on him, as he would often coincide in most that I said, back would return the feeling or the fancy, whichever I am to call it, that now has such power over him, and efface all else. I therefore said, 'My dear Ernest, I must not argue with you; but hear what Maria says of you.' I then read him your



for! I can now understand y
even envy it! But is it not
that in outward show you
this angel from that hollow ti

"Thus does he wrest to h
ever may seem to make again
heart longs for repose, which
cannot have whilst it continue
pervading feeling; but it s
when, as we were parting fo
him all your letters except th
seal, and said, 'There, Ern
if you cannot sleep, pore o
think I would trust them to a
I must not let you suppose I
own account, for I know it wil
as she can now feel, if I ar
she has been the means of

see she calls you; and recollect whilst you are reading, that it is owing to no merits or demerits of our own, that our fates were not changed—you were just as likely to have won such a heart as Maria's, and I to have received the insulting gift that was offered to you.'

"Seeing him look at the only letter I had kept, I added, 'No, Ernest, I cannot spare you this—you know I have just read it to you—it came last from her—I dare not be without it. If I feel my cruel fate pressing too heavy on me, I have only to look at the lines her hand has traced—to kiss, as it were, that dear hand with my eyes. Do not laugh at me, Ernest!—and I bow again patiently beneath the killing weight.'

"'I, too, was capable of this; but she did not choose it should be so!' replied he, as he hurried away, his face showing deeply both regret and indignation.

* * * * *

"I little thought, when I began this letter, that Ernest would be on the Rhine as soon as it—

indeed, will be its bearer. It is not more than an hour since he went to bed; and five minutes ago a courier arrived, to say, that his only near relative lies dangerously ill at ———, within two miles of where you now are. I have ordered every thing to be prepared for his departure; but as he could not possibly start, for want of post-horses, for several hours, I shall let him sleep until four in the morning, and then will he have to awake to a fresh sorrow.

"I do not commend Ernest to you further than I have done, for, by my own feelings, well do I know that any one coming from me will enter into your heart at once: but, Maria! he is my oldest friend; and, except two, my dearest; and although he has not to be separated from all he holds dear on earth, and to be aware that the being for whose sake alone he loves the earth, is dying, yet has he much to bear; and without the consolation, too, of thinking that it is in a cause worth suffering for—and neither will you nor I deny the support this reflection gives.

Ernest will come to see you the moment he
to another will permit. It is necessary for
make you but a single request: and only
ite that this should be made, because the
ght might not strike you. Avoid throwing
much into the company of those of your sex
you whom you would not wish him to love.
he wisest of us are inclined to think, when we
sustained any very great loss or injury, if we
repair that, we gain all we can either want or
re; and therefore I should not be surprised at
of his attaching himself to a person in other
pects totally unsuited to him, provided he con-
ves her to possess those qualities he has found
lamentably deficient in another. It is not un-
rvaluing our friend to speak of him thus: his
fore sound and healthy mind is now in an un-
ealthy state, and he requires the same wholesome
straint which other patients do, and only what
you or I might require if similarly situated.

"Had I not seen Ernest before he was thus
lled away beyond my reach—had I not made

the attempt to repay his kind and enduring friendship by endeavouring to do him what little good lay in my power, I should now have sorely reproached myself. And who made me send for him?—who has prevented this self-reproach? You may say, that it was mere good fortune I had sufficient time to obey your desire; but, if this be a gift of fortune, am I likely to value it the less, because it is presented to me by Maria's hand!

"Oh, Maria! it seems to me almost an impossibility, that one now sleeping beneath the same roof which shelters me from a storm I at this moment hear beating without, will, within a few days, see you, your father, our poor Li—all my most beloved, most familiar objects. Coming from one to the other so quickly, Charles will be able to tell who is furthest on that gloomy road, which, for us, alone leads to a place of meeting.

"The storm is roaring and raving, as if for an object to wreak its fury on; it might here find at least one willing one: but the lightnings themselves seem to avoid the head of him who longs



for death. Sorrow will not allow any but her own ministers, lingering disease and slow decay, to offer up her victims: they must be purified by them before they are accepted. Be it so, for even they must make an end at last.

"I have just stolen to Ernest's door: he sleeps soundly in spite of the storm. How will a few hours change the scene! the elements without will be at rest; but there will be a fresh tempest in the bosom that now lies so peaceful.

"Thunder used to alarm me; but now I sit perfectly unmoved at its loudest crash, and only think of the last night-storm that I heard. Must that bosom not have had a fiery trial in which the natural feelings of dread are burnt up, and have lost their power?

Maria! that night-storm was when we were in our hut: you recollect it well. And shall I ever forget what the first flash showed me—an angel bending over me, to save? I then had to cheer and comfort one whom it was bliss to be near. When I think of this, and then look round on the



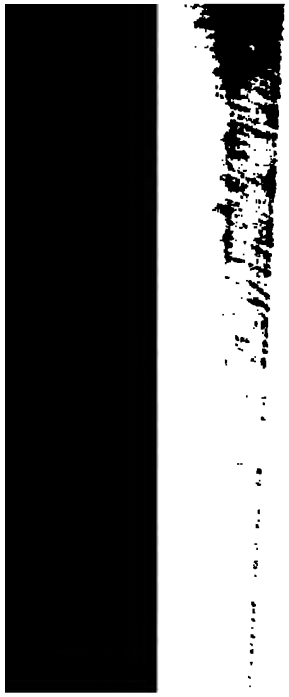
CHAPTER V.

"The obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous, and did shake."

SHAKSPEARE.

ON the following morning Montfort continued his letter:—

"I was mistaken as to the duration of the storm; it rages as violently as ever. But as I awoke my poor friend to his new sorrow, whilst there was a pause, we both distinctly heard the cry of that bird that once before seemed, if not to rule our destinies, at least to foretell them. It required a very little stretch of my excited, and certainly, as I know myself, weakened mind, to make me fancy it was



[redacted] believe our powers are [redacted]
[redacted] hear that!"

[redacted] was distressed to think [redacted]
[redacted] and perhaps ideal [redacted]
[redacted] of grief which I had t[redacted]
[redacted] sentiment. He asked, i[redacted]
[redacted] reading. 'But what [redacted]
[redacted]" that I felt convince[redacted]
[redacted] what I had to comm[redacted]
[redacted] not afflict you wit[redacted]
[redacted] but every now and [redacted]
[redacted] the gale, we hear[redacted]
[redacted] it even ami[redacted]
[redacted] and grief, and sa[redacted]
[redacted] that is s[redacted]
[redacted] both!' I r[redacted]

"'Ay, but it is *some bird* that we have heard before. It does not lie now, at all events. Montfort! there are, perhaps, thoughts which we should not tell aloud, for fear of even laughing at ourselves; but, my dear Montfort! you can hardly conceive how much that horrid scream has added to my apprehensions!'

"'Man yourself, my dear Ernest!'

"'I will! I do! but if he, and you, and she whom I love without knowing her, all die, what shall I have worth living for?'

"'Your country, at least, Ernest.'

"'True! and I love it: but that is a cold feeling to be the only one, in spite of what the philosophic fools who outraged nature in Greece and Rome may have said.'

"This conversation took place whilst Ernest was hurriedly dressing. After being silent for a while, he continued, 'I thought, by this time I should have had one near me who would have supported me in every grief, even as I would have supported her—in every grief except what would then have



as I have mentioned? Surely there was perfectly the reverse of any similarity in the two scenes, to have caused an association of ideas; and full as great a difference is there between our feelings then and now. Then—if they were not all peace, it was only because disturbed by hopes and joyous anticipations: think of our hopes and anticipations now! Then—the young trees lifted their green heads into the sunshine, if not in perfect stillness, only gently waved by wooing breezes, the storm as little feared as felt; now—one is again bowed and bent, whilst yet its very roots remain shaken from a former violence, and the other lies crashed and broken on the earth.

"Ernest will tell thee the truth about me: do not fear him! but be prepared to hear him say, he sees a speedy ending to my voyage. Heaven only grant that, ere it be over, thou mayst be safe in the port!"

* * * * *

No sooner had Ernest gone on his harassing journey—harassing alike to mind and body, than

[redacted]

maniac laugh, and the maniac roar; but the maniac leap settles all."

Still less heeded was all that is fair or noble in art; and he hastened on to Rome, thinking that there, at least, he might meet with objects which would not jar upon his feelings.

Venice had been past endurance. Its ruin has all that is painful in decay, and nothing that is picturesque: it is the ruin of a modern house, whence life and joy are just departing, and over which Time hath not cast its hallowing mantle. The sigh and the groan yet sound in our ears, and there is nothing to console us for hearing them: ruin, appearing through the distance of ages, is like a huge rude object seen in twilight, or from afar;—it may look grand and impressive through the dusky obscurity, but if shown too clearly to us, all that is harsh and cold is discovered, and strikes gratingly upon our senses.

But notwithstanding Montfort's expectations of finding a resting-place at Rome, it was not many days after he had first entered the Sacred City

[redacted]

kindred than I would do for thee?—I must not boast, even to Maria! but, I think not!—sterner souls they had; but stronger, I deny.

"And if I deny this for our sex, shall I not do so for yours? Amongst them, too, were those who would not, for a moment, have hesitated between death and a giving up of principle; but there ends the likeness: their devotedness in Virtue's cause all might have admired, but who would have loved it; whilst thou dost force those who will not practise virtue, to yet have a kindly feeling towards it? No, Maria! although showing a perseverance—an obstinacy in doing right, which they scarcely could have equalled, thou hast nothing of the Roman in thee.

"Still, there are Roman ruins that do enter into my heart; for when I leave their proud though shattered seat of empire, and come to love Pompeii, 'the silent city of the dead,' I feel that they were men—I forget all in them I cannot love, and only recollect they lived and suffered like ourselves: in the street of the tombs, their hu-

[redacted]

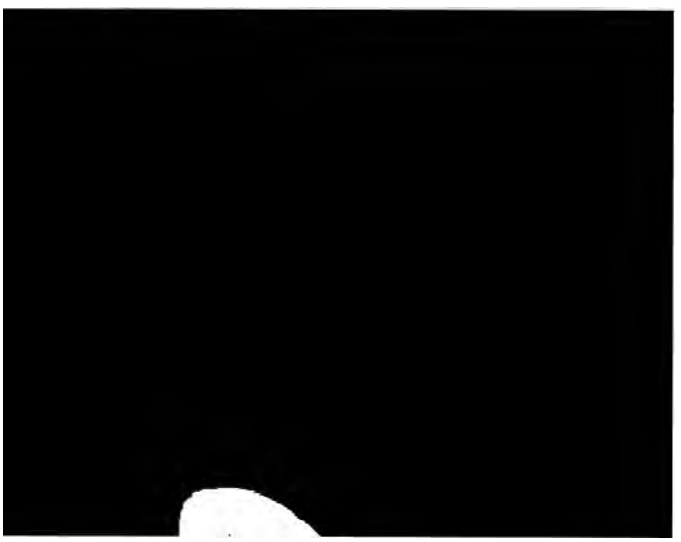
her drooping head is not Roman, but still a sister, —a sister in the relationship of goodness—a girl, not many years older than the young sufferer, kisses away the drops of agony, cheers the fainting spirit, points to the skies, and tells of a home where there are no partings, and sorrow is not a guest—'into which no enemy enters, and whence no friend departs,'*—sings so sweet a song of hope that the sufferer's writhings turn into smiles, and she sinks to sleep on the bosom of one angel to awake in the arms of another.

"Then comes the turn of the supporter. So, before a cutting blast, first one lily droops, and then another, until the earth is left bare and desolate, and those who are on it wish to quit so lone a place.

"But who was she in the vision who thus turned pain into ease, sorrow into joy? It is one who hath done more than this—far more! who hath

* Sacrilege—stolen from a parson's sermon; but I would "render unto Cæsar" if I did not fear he might be displeased at my mentioning his name.

[redacted] the drooping hand, but the sinking [redacted]—hath strengthened in whom fainting, caused [redacted] changed it from evil to good, [redacted] where before there was 'no [redacted]. [redacted] not, my own! I am not [redacted]—it is difficult to err through too much [redacted]: it is not over-praise that does not [redacted]—I know it was not Maria who did [redacted] but no mortal could have done it, but it [redacted] of Him to whom we owe all, speaking in her and by her. She was only the humble [redacted] of unspeakable goodness; but is it not [redacted] that the lower I place her merit, the [redacted] I love her!



is worn and wasted as I, we shall require no funeral fires, save those which were lit within us long ago,—slowly have they burnt, but surely,—tears, at least, will not quench them.

"Maria! my own, on earth and in Heaven, I am dying—yes, dying! I know, I feel that I have not long to live—nor hast thou. Will not he whom we have obeyed to the best of our poor abilities, to make up for all the evils we have brought upon him, consent to let us die together? But if Maria thinks it wrong to ask him, let her not do so on my account. She has only to tell me not to wish it, and I will obey her as far as obedience is possible—I will not seek to approach, but only, when I am sinking to the earth, turn my eyes towards her, as those of a follower of the false prophet turn towards his tomb.

"But yet, Maria, if I might be allowed to come back even to the Alps, it would be a blessing; now they seem to me to thrust their frozen heads rudely between us, and separate us more than twice the distance we are apart would do. This

[redacted]

kindred than I would do for thee?—I must not boast, even to Maria! but, I think not!—sterner souls they had; but stronger, I deny.

"And if I deny this for our sex, shall I not do so for yours? Amongst them, too, were those who would not, for a moment, have hesitated between death and a giving up of principle; but there ends the likeness: their devotedness in Virtue's cause all might have admired, but who would have loved it; whilst thou dost force those who will not practise virtue, to yet have a kindly feeling towards it? No, Maria! although showing a perseverance—an obstinacy in doing right, which they scarcely could have equalled, thou hast nothing of the Roman in thee.

"Still, there are Roman ruins that do enter into my heart; for when I leave their proud though shattered seat of empire, and come to lone Pompeii, 'the silent city of the dead,' I feel that they were men—I forget all in them I cannot love, and only recollect they lived and suffered like ourselves: in the street of the tombs, their hu-

[redacted]

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ourselves: in the street of the tombs, their [illegible]

that he wrote Maria the following letter from the shores of the Bay of Naples:—

"You may think it strange, Maria! that I should give up Rome for any other place; for so should I have thought a few days ago; but I soon found that it is not the ruins of power, that suit with the ruins of happiness. No! as I gazed up at temple and tower—at the mighty Coliseum, looking not made with hands, but born with the mountains—as I gazed on these, lying around like dying lions in Time's arena—my heart told me it had nothing to do with them: it told me a far different tale; and what part of the story of Rome



kindred than I would do for thee?—I must not boast, even to Maria! but, I think not!—sterner souls they had; but stronger, I deny.

"And if I deny this for our sex, shall I not do so for yours? Amongst them, too, were those who would not, for a moment, have hesitated between death and a giving up of principle; but there ends the likeness: their devotedness in Virtue's cause all might have admired, but who would have loved it; whilst thou dost force those who will not practise virtue, to yet have a kindly feeling towards it? No, Maria! although showing a perseverance—an obstinacy in doing right, which they scarcely could have equalled, thou hast nothing of the Roman in thee.

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reach it, I shall still go on towards you. How I shall bear travelling, I do not know, but I think the hope of seeing you once again will support me until I do see you; and then, perhaps, the flickering flame will give one brighter glare, and be extinguished. Be prepared for this, my own!

"What do we not owe to our true and zealous friend? but his kindness does not end here, for in six hours after the courier quits with this letter, he will be on the road to join you, and to bring you to me. Oh, Charles! to bring you to me!!!

"And my Charles must obey this friend in every thing that relates to his travelling—that is, if he would attend to his Maria's most anxious wishes; for as time forbids my mentioning them in this letter, I shall fully explain them to Ernest. The offer to go to you, and the thought, were both Ernest's own; for although the idea instantly struck me also, I had not said a word on the subject when he insisted on being allowed to do so. To value this offer as it should be valued, you must be informed of what he gives up; and, strange to

say, it is with the utmost pleasure I tell you, he gives up a great deal—that is, so I think: but you know women are never tired of magnifying the importance of their own sex.

"However, I hardly know, if that should be called 'giving up,' for which I am convinced he feels amply repaid, by an approving look from my sweet little attendant, Maria Arnulph.

"The courier cannot begin his journey for another half hour, and therefore I have time to tell Charles of that from which he will receive sincere pleasure. This gives me another gratification besides the informing him of what I know will please him, for through it I have the opportunity of showing the delight I take in imitating him in every thing, as he will not refuse to believe a fact of which I am so firmly convinced—that it is to be like him I enter thus deeply into the feelings of others at such a moment as this, rather than from present gratitude to Ernest, or regard for Maria Arnulph.

"And if, in our situation, the doing so may seem

[redacted]

give them up, because I know what I have to inform you of will be a source of rejoicing to you on your friend's account.

"But in one respect I must still claim credit—for strictly attending to your wishes as to the female companions I threw Ernest amongst; and I deserve it the more, as I neither held, nor hold, the same opinion with you on the subject: on the contrary, I feel convinced, that he would have distinguished Maria Arnulph amidst a thousand; and that he would not have felt the least regard for her, although thrown much more into her company than he was, had she not been suited to him in tastes, feelings, and abilities. Indeed, Charles! it is detracting sadly from the dignity of the love woman inspires, thus to set it down to an accidental circumstance, and I will not allow you to have such ideas.

"I must admit, however, that my obeying you in this respect, was a matter of no trouble to me, as Maria Arnulph, the most opposite of any of my acquaintance to the description of

[redacted]

own, as Ernest can possibly have; and were he not eminently suited to these, he never would have had a chance with her. One thing, however, I must admit—I made a point of doing that which I otherwise very probably might have done—of telling Ernest of Maria's constant kindness and affection for me; and it required very little reasoning for a person already inclined to love, to prove to himself, that she who was true and affectionate to one, would be true and affectionate to another.

"Although I have confined Ernest's reward for his goodness to us, to a look, I fancy he is of opinion that he has received something still less equivocal. When I thanked him, from an overflowing heart, he replied, casting his eyes on the ground, 'I have already been richly repaid.'

"I asked, in a way he fully understood, 'By my gratitude alone, Ernest!'

"'No! that would be ample payment for any such sacrifice of my feelings, but I have been overpaid, most infinitely, by what, you must pardon me if I say, I value still more.'

"Maria Arnulph, to whom his looks were now directed in a way that could not be mistaken, got up, and stammered out something about, 'If she might leave my presence?'

"'Yes, my dear, if you wish it.'

"But before she could do so, Ernest had seize her hand, and they stood in the middle of th room, without speaking, covered with confusio and one, if not both, heartily wishing me out of i

"The suspense was so painful, that, without e actly knowing what I did, I said, 'Perhaps y had better let her go now.'

"As he led her to the door, I heard him sa

[redacted]

"'What! and you not?' came from her warm young heart, as she threw herself into my arms.

"She then begged my pardon for what she had done. 'And does Maria beg pardon for showing kindness to one who requires it more than any other mortal?' I then added, 'But have you thought, Maria, of the great difference of your ages?'

"'Oh!' replied she, when I at length got her to speak plainly, 'if he loves me, I would rather have him than any one else in the world.'

"'If he loves you? did you really not hear his last speech to you?'

"The girl's only answer was, hiding her burning face in my lap; and I shortly left her in the society of her own feelings; at that moment so perfectly sufficient to her happiness, that she wished for no other—not even for his who had caused them.

"Now, surely, my Charles will not tell Ernest of all this when they meet, for he must know, that Maria Arnulph never could forgive

[redacted] whatever I imagine to. But, at least, he will [redacted] I must. Ernest truly plainly declares that he loves her as I know she deserves to be loved: or Ernest will not have forgotten what was [redacted] name on such an occasion, (who [redacted] nothing like so great an excuse,) lest her [redacted] might be called in question: and you may [redacted] Mamma's feelings are exactly similar. But [redacted], however, cannot be Mamma's case, as, if you tell [redacted] I will be nothing but a breach of faith on [redacted] part. And mine, I fear, and not only done [redacted] her consent, but without even her [redacted].

[redacted]

to believe them to be very small in reality; and my occasionally doing the same thing, shows I sometimes agree with him. And now, in this spirit, I ask, if, considering what I wrote to tell of, I have not sunk my own situation in that of our friends, as much as even Charles ever did? Say, that, throughout, it looks like an effort; but is there no merit in making such an effort? I might have made it, but I could not have succeeded in it, had not my mind been acted on in a way which seems to me almost supernatural—not by an owl in a chimney, or a hollow tree, Charles! but by a thought that told me I was, in doing so, best pleasing him whom it is no less my duty, than it is my highest delight, to please.

"Besides, the knowledge, that, if we are alive, we must meet within a certain number of days, has roused a mind which, it seemed to me before nothing earthly could rouse. Have I attributed my present excitement to the right cause, or is it only what has been called 'a lightning before death?' Oh! my own! my own! surely we

to drive the dart deep enough, where there was so little left to offer resistance. The very thought of meeting again, which at first supported them so delusively, had alone nearly cut off all their hopes: it was like the sudden cessation of a mighty wind from bearing on a gallant vessel; the re-action is so great, that it ends all doubts at once, by burying her in the waves.



daring, it may need to be chastised, I will bid him remember, that there are others mentioned in our tale, with whose fates, I would fain hope, he is interested: and would also bid him know, that, although we have had little else than gloom lately, the relater is by no means all gloom.

* * * *

A young lady sat in a bower of roses (I 'm not quite sure about the roses, but, if they were not there on such an occasion, they ought to have been) at the hour young ladies love so much —the hour at which this young lady had so often been made love to by the "silent worship of the heart;" which must be the most talkative silence in the world, it says such a number of sweet things: "Pale the young thing looks, but 'passing lovely!'"—"pale," says my reader, "for her friends' and mistress's loss; for it is Maria Arnulph waiting her lover's approach." Nay, gentle reader; if you bethink you, I never told you that that mistress was lost: and, oh! 'tis she herself—the good, the beautiful, our own Maria! Death, even

[redacted] quite poetic; [redacted] her temper shown some [redacted] throwing the [redacted] that same rage, [redacted] her, "A [redacted] opposite way." It [redacted] ght probably have [redacted] y boy that is!" [redacted] heart could give more than she against her [redacted] aged; and that [redacted] l in the arms of [redacted] e of Hapsburg, [redacted] mbassador, [redacted] lliance with the [redacted] with the Young [redacted] d by the Emperor, [redacted] States, and, if the truth [redacted] f the Queen herself.

[redacted] my readers are [redacted] abusing the poor [redacted] ach of faith, broken [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [

but as if to render her quite poetic justice for that wonderful effort of temper shown some wretched months back, in not throwing the lamp at the little page's head, that same page, beautiful as ever, ran in to tell her, "A horseman was riding like a fury up the opposite way." It is thought that now Maria might probably have remarked, "What a very pretty boy that is!" if she had had time; but before her heart could give more than one or two good bumps against her bosom, her lips were otherwise engaged; and that bosom, heart and all, was locked in the arms of ——— the reigning Prince of Hapsburg, who, having previously sent an ambassador, in all due form, to seek for him an alliance with the Imperial House, through a union with the Young Queen of H——, had been accepted by the Emperor, with the full consent of the States, and, if the truth must be told, with that of the Queen herself.

Now I dare say my readers are in a great rage with Maria, and abusing the poor thing for want of constancy, breach of faith, broken vows, &c. &c.

and that my most gentle readers are by far the most violent; whereas this was one of the most sensible acts of her life; and it is too bad to be abused for doing what is reasonable. I declare I will not allow her to be called such shocking names with impunity! and the Spiritual Court, I can tell you, my mistresses, is a dangerous matter to meddle with! When Maria found, (after being constant to Montfort a much longer time than most people would,) that to marry him was impossible, she consented very wisely, to marry the Prince of Hapsburg, which was possible; thereby gratifying the wishes of her father, of the people, and, as aforesaid, of herself. This, in fact, was her only chance, and



is, indeed, deceased; or, as you would say, in plain terms, gone to——" but these terms are plain enough.

Should my readers, however, not be convinced by the above, in my opinion, very satisfactory reasons, we had perhaps better listen quietly together to what the pair are saying.

We left them in each other's arms, where people seldom talk much for the first minute or two. At length the Prince said, "And art thou mine—now, truly mine—my own, for ever, Maria?"

Amidst Maria's sobs was faintly heard—"For ever."

"And will it be believed, that a Queen and an Emperor sought to give up their throne for my sake?"

"And is it so hard to believe, Charles! that there should be two persons who prefer happiness to pomp or power?

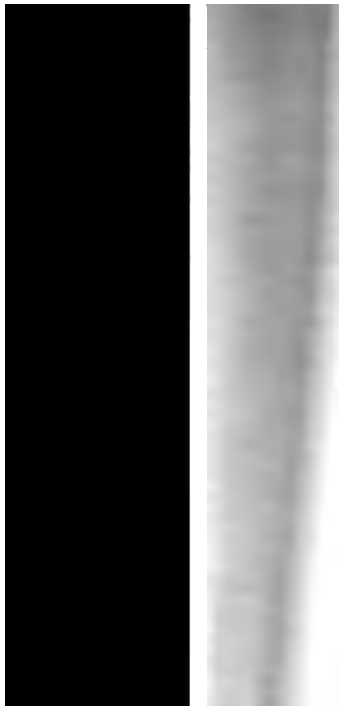
"But will Maria ever be able to reconcile you to that state which she knows you dislike so much?"

[redacted]

the only thing that ever reconciled that step to his conscience, however much he wished it, was his conceiving himself called upon to do so by the strongest of all voices—the voice of nature. And, oh, Charles! if any thing can ever make us not regret our stations, it must be the kindly feelings all the people have shown towards us. They seemed to enter into our very romance with enthusiasm, and sought a means of avoiding for us the laws which they themselves had made."

"Can I ever bear any but good feelings to those who have given me such a gift? Oh, you know if this is ever to be forgotten! We should have both been better pleased if the only crown ever again to touch this dear, dear head, were my crown of flowers; but—"

"But Charles will not refuse his Maria whatever crown she wears," said the girl, with a smile of bashful triumph. Pressing her to his heart again and again was the only answer she could receive to such a speech: but when he could speak he said, "Do I hold in my arms she who



"There!" said she, pointing to an arbour at a little distance: "he only went away in order to let us meet alone."

"Bless him for that too! 'tis so like him!"

"But you must never call him by such a name again to me, Charles!"

"What must I call him, then?" said Montfort, smiling.

"Does he not call you his son? and what do I call him?"

"But I will not call him my father until Maria gives me a real right to do so."

"And do you think, Charles, it will be necessary to use any such means to force me to that?" said Maria, without the least shame in the world: and Montfort, so far from appearing astonished at her impudence, caught her in his arms again, and gave her a thousand kisses: until at length Maria drew back a little—just as much as modesty required; but not one bit more—and said, "Come, Charles! come: let us go to my father."

"I have forgotten him, indeed! but he will forgive me."

Whilst the lovers were settling this little affair, they were both nearly laid prostrate, for with one bound the monster Li dashed in, and sprung with his huge paws on Montfort's back; and soon the arms that had so lately been around a different form, were hugging his shaggy sides.

Li continued to show his uncouth love in such an uncouth way, that Charles was obliged (or chose to think he was obliged) to again support the lady for fear of her being upset: "Even Maria," said he, as she hung upon his arm, just sufficiently to feel that it was about her waist, "can scarcely tell what were my feelings when I embraced him last."

"Did he overtake you, then, when he followed you?"

"Yes! and I stopped, and got off to him; and then told him he must go back and do that which, oh, thank God! it will now be the object of my life to do—take care of Maria."

They found the Emperor so pale and trembling, that his daughter was quite frightened, and even Montfort looked a little alarmed as he held his almost powerless hand. "Nonsense, you silly girl!" said her father, "it will be over in a moment." And when he had leant his head upon her shoulder for a little while, he had gained strength enough to press them once more into each other's arms. "Take her, Montfort!—take her. It is the only gift I have to give, worthy of you!"

I am not good at describing raptures—I never was. How should I be?—I never feel them myself. I make it a rule not to let any thing disturb my own equanimity: then how should I understand the vagaries of another? Besides, the first tumult of happiness was not the happiness Maria and her lover longed for: they knew these could not last—they did not wish them to last: they longed to exchange their rending grief, not for joys as fierce, but for a peaceful resting on each other's affections—I hardly know how to express it—for the repose of loving. This, in their most

violent moments, seemed to them the greatest of earthly blessings; and this they found at length.

I have relied on my reader's sagacity for finding out that the meeting of the lovers took place at B——. Some of the good citizens were astonished to think the Court should go to a summer residence at such a time of the year; for the Earth had not yet woke from her wintry trance, notwithstanding my little flourish about the roses. But what should citizens know about sentiment? They, poor souls! could not make out why their Young Queen should choose to walk about leafless woods rather than sit at home in a fine palace, and make love comfortably. "Comfortable love!" Oh, preserve me! Whoever joined the two words together before? Maria laughed heartily at it when Montfort some time afterwards heard the story, and told her of it.

But, however strange they might have thought their pet's fancy, they did not doubt that it was correct, for now they all felt as if each individually had assisted in promoting the only object that

could have made her happy, they loved her so much the more, that they could not believe in her doing any thing that was even absurd. Surely, it is one of the most evident bounties of the Creator, that we cannot help loving, and therefore receiving joy from, those to whom we do good. So convinced were they Maria must be right, that I should not wonder if she proved the innocent cause of many a cold and sore throat to those to whose good-will she owed so much, for I have little doubt all the city damsels will insist on being made love to in a similar manner for the future.

The courtiers, too, who professed to have sentiment, (but they made a slight mistake—it was only sentimentality)—were also at a loss to account for such a fancy. A (what they called) love of nature, they thought quite correct in summer, when one is obliged to ride about woods and lanes for the fashion of the thing; but, in winter, quite out of place.

The fact is, the lovers had chosen to meet in a

spot so sadly endeared to them, as it did not delay the event a single hour, and it seemed like turning their past sorrows into joy. Besides, although lovers are very fond of talking of flowers, and Spring, and "Love, whose month is ever May," I believe they seldom know exactly what time of the year it is. Winter! what cared they for winter! When winter was in their souls, it stripped these scenes of all their loveliness; but now, the summer within had shed upon them "beauty, life, and light." This I am quite sure of, that when Maria and Montfort visited their haunts again—when she sat, with her arm through his, looking at the view whose fading beauties they had watched as a memento mori—or, sometimes, leaning on his shoulder, and crying for joy in that very spot where she had shed far other tears—they neither of them felt it the least cold. Papa was of a different opinion, and was always scolding—as papas will when too happy—about their doing such silly things. This occurred so often that he at length said, "I believe you like to hear me scold, or you would not so continually do wrong."

"And ought I not to like it? Have I heard you scold for many months?" replied Maria, kissing him.

The only retort the Emperor could think of, was, a "threat" to get them married as soon as possible, and then there would be an end of their romance. But even in this idea he was afterwards obliged to own he had been mistaken, for it seemed as if their romance had only then began, precisely where that of most other persons ends.

The doctors had tried to frighten the Emperor by talking to him of the violent change the Young Queen's manner of life had undergone all of a sudden, and the possibly violent effect this might have upon her constitution;—from being taken from one scene to another in a state that gave exercise neither to her mind nor body—to running through the wintry woods at a rate that nearly tired Li himself. But they did not succeed in frightening him much, for he was too well convinced her disease had been in the mind alone; and when she came back to him from their walks

with annoyance shown in her countenance every day—or, if he went out to meet her, and saw his many-thousand feet stepping along over the rustling ice with the springy tread of a fairy—a spirit and life about her that made what she had been but long ago appear to him like a dream, he could not be ashamed even if he had tried—and he knew the contrary.

And still less anxiety than her father had one who loved her even better, which can only be accounted for by supposing the concomb thought, that his presence could not but have the same effect as Mamma that he felt hers had on him. His anxiety

[redacted]

"And why should I not, after all you have suffered?"

"I need not explain why you should not; but I know you have not."

"I believe you are nearly right, although I feel astonished at it myself."

"That I can understand, for it is my own feeling repeated. I cannot but be surprised that I who, a little while ago, thought I was never to hope again, should now feel as if I were never to fear again. The current of our feelings has indeed changed, and sets onward now as headlong as it did before in the opposite direction; but this should not be, Charles!"

I own I have been so hard upon the dear old sun, in the way of similes, that I ought to have more conscience than to go to him again so soon—and yet I must. By the way, I read a review the other day, which seemed to say, that when once an object has been seized upon as a simile by one author, no other has a right to touch it, although he should place it in a new light; but the writer

should have recollected there is only one set of sun, moon, and stars for the use of the whole of us; and what would even Homer himself have done, had he been deprived of them, and they were all appropriated before his day? For my own part, I really could not get on at all without them, and therefore without scruple I proceed to say,—

If the former situation of my hero and heroine was a sunset, where each moment left less of life and light, and where it seemed certain that death would as full surely follow the one as night the other, their present was the glowing sunrise of an eastern sky, where strength and beauty come on so fast we have scarcely time to mark their

"I once thought a laugh would tell you the contrary—that I was not Maria."

"What does she mean?"

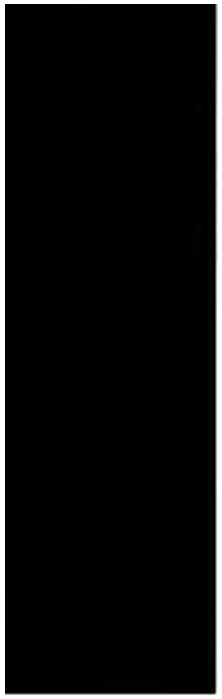
"Why I used sometimes to be in a dreadful fright lest you should fancy me too serious."

"I seldom found you serious except on serious occasions, and never when I did not think it became you."

"Ah!" said Maria, smiling, "that speech would have made me very happy some time ago; but you don't think I care about it now, do you?"

Maria's laugh affected her father differently. He did not make any remark at the time, but went out of the room without speaking, and so quietly, that they did not observe him. When he returned, he took his daughter in his arms, and said, "Oh, my child! I have heard you laugh once more."

And how they did run about! the cold, clear, inspiriting air was so enjoyed by them, that both agreed they did not wish even for May. As, on a frosty morning, with only Li for an attendant,



CHAPTER VII.

"If thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I 'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo: but, else, not for the world."

SHAKSPEARE.

AND in their walks Maria and Montfort often encountered a pair to the full as happy as they were—so happy, that even after contemplating the exalted and exalting love of the former, I can look upon the affection of the latter with delight; ay, and feel as much confidence in what has undergone no real trial, as in that which has been tried in the fire.

Ernest and Maria Arnulph could not meet with such open and acknowledged joy as their



did not please him less:
not greatly troubled. It
going on beneath.

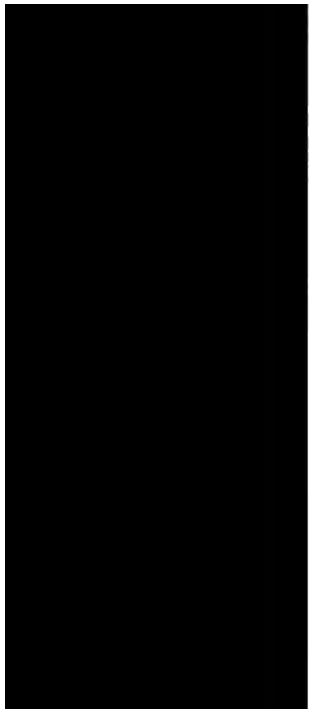
But even this conceal
concealment, was quickly
and Maria, although they
they owed to their two
acted as if they sought to
mical way to themselve
other: and owing to their
soon the opportunity he s

"Miss Arnulph," said
make you believe that the
is such a one as you desc
loved another—it *has* lov
rent, so that perhaps 'tis
if that was my opinion

in any mortal's goodness so implicitly as it trusts in yours—I thought I never should, with one exception, put trust in woman's honesty of purpose and faith again; and she whom I excepted had proved hers beyond the doubting of suspicion herself: but oh, Miss Arnulph! only say you return the feelings I bear you, and I would not ask, I would not have from you such proofs as your mistress has given, if they could be mine without your suffering one moment's pain. Do not, for Heaven's sake, reply to me now: Montfort shall tell you all that has happened to destroy my confidence in your sex; then think of what I now say to you, and you will be convinced how much I must love her who has thus had power to change my very soul."

Miss Arnulph, however, showed she was determined to speak, although she found a great difficulty in doing so, and was desired not. Seeing her about to make the attempt, Ernest said, "Oh, will you not hear Montfort first?"

"I do not require it, I know all. I will not keep you in suspense for a moment."



from his lips, "I am peculiarly

Arnulph, you may now surely ex-
elf to me as if you were speaking to a
nd—I mean, you may wait, and calm
nd, and collect your thoughts; or stay
nger, and write to me; for now I can bear
hing."

nd as he said this, Ernest drew her trembling
through his, and led her towards the villa;
if, 'the more you call, the more I won't
me,' is sometimes the motto of Miss Arnulph's
; its converse, 'the more you don't call, the
more I will come,' is occasionally acted on:
and now, Maria, prompted rather by gratitude for
Ernest's generous delicacy and regard for her
feelings, than by sheer obstinacy, proceeded,
almost in spite of him, to explain what those
feelings were.

"I owe it to you," said she, in a voice very low,
but, on the whole, more distinct than might have
been expected, "to explain myself so that it may

[redacted]

it was once given to another, and cruelly used. Do not think that such can ever be my idea: oh! if I am thought worthy to be the means of really binding up so noble a heart as I know yours to be, I shall indeed think that I have not lived in vain: I only ask to be assured that that heart has not been given to me solely because it has been so injured—that it would have been mine, if we had met, though it had never been so used."

"My beloved girl! for mine you shall be! your mind is perfect; it has the exact, the very same thought mine had."

Miss Arnulph did not laugh at the very modest reason Ernest had given as a proof of the perfection of her mind, because that mind was too agitated, notwithstanding the long speech she had made, to think of it; but she replied, with evident delight, "Then you do approve of what I have said?"

"Can I but approve of it, when it shows me how highly you value—I fear, too highly—that

which you would have given to yourself, for yourself, and from no adventitious circumstance? But how shall Ernest (and will not his Maria call him by that name, henceforth, and for ever?) bring this conviction to her?"

"Not by leaving me, Ernest!"

But, as I before declared, I cannot describe raptures. This, however, was the pair the Young Queen and Montfort so often met; and I leave any one to judge if it was not a happy pair.

Next to the principal personages mentioned in our history, the individual made happiest by the thoughts of Maria's approaching marriage was the Countess of A——, for to her care, as they knew it would please her, was consigned the weighty matter of the wedding-dress. And never did mortal feel more important under any trust. She seemed to think it of much the same nature as when some gifted statesman, a nation's hope, is singled out to pilot the vessel of the state through storms that threaten it with wreck. Maria's own taste would have led

her to prefer that dress in which, strange as it was, she had won her lover's heart, if it could have been so managed that she should be seen in it by him alone. But the truth is, she would not willingly have delayed the ceremony one single hour for any dress in the world—as will appear from the following conversation:—"I have ever looked upon it as such an utter impossibility that Maria should be my wife," said Montfort, "that until she is so, I shall always dread something may yet prevent it. But you, Maria!" continued he, looking quite jealous, "are so happy now, that you do not seem to care about it."

"Charles! you must ask my forgiveness for that speech! For," said she, turning away her blushing face, "if you could look into my heart, you would find the same foolish dread there."

His pardon was not long delayed, for this sin of impatience is one seldom visited with any very heavy punishment by young ladies.

The Countess of A—— did sometimes a little annoy Maria with the fuss she made. "I was

which you would have given to yourself, for yourself, and from no adventitious circumstance! But have dash Ernest (and will not his Maria call him by that name, henceforth, and for ever!) many due conviction to her?"

"Yes, by having me, Ernest!"

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Next to the principal personages mentioned in our history, the individual made happiest by the thoughts of Maria's approaching marriage was the Countess

tempted to ask her to-day," said the latter, "if she had not better crush me with the weight of all the crown jewels at once."

"Then, if you had done so, I should have given you a scolding for it. You know the old lady is fond of you in her way."

"Oh, then, Charles! fancy I have done it, and give me my scolding now."

"No, no! I shall find so many real causes to do so by and bye, that I will not conjure up an imaginary one now."

"I must have my wish, dear Charles! for you have not scolded me once since you came back to me; and it gives me so much more confidence in my

"I fear you will always have it after."

"That I will not, I am determined! For if nothing else will do," continued she, with a laugh, "I will behave so bad that you cannot possibly let me have it."

"What? Will not letting a woman always have her own way, please her?"

"Not if she has the true feelings of a woman. I dare say I shall like to have it often, if I can; but I would not always have it, for the world. Can you think I would not wish to feel that I am a wife?"

* * * * *

"But," said the happy, the married Maria, looking quite in a pet, "indeed, my father! you are very foolish, very ill-natured, and very unreasonable!"

"Why? For not letting you do the most unreasonable thing in the world?"

"But I maintain that it is the most reasonable thing in the world."

Now Maria's "most reasonable thing in the

[redacted]

who said, "You shall not beat her for telling the truth: I believe you have just as little sense as she has."

"Well, then, if Maria can go with perfect safety, I do not think she can be more anxious than I am."

"Why, certainly, I do not think there can be any real danger. But what makes you wish to go there so much, Maria? Do you think the old lady will insist on Montfort's kissing you again?"

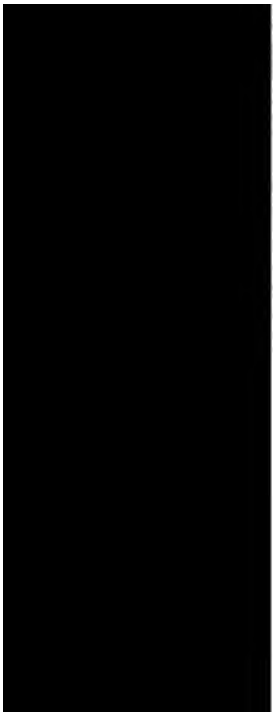
"If she does," said Montfort, "I am sure we won't give her so much trouble as we did last time—shall we, Maria?"

Maria gave her husband quite a romping push, and pulling her father's ear, kissed him, and said, "Now do be good, and let us go!"

"Well, I believe if Montfort does not mind risking a good-for-nothing wife, I must run the chance of getting rid of a troublesome daughter."

"Then, Charles, you will not refuse, I know?"

"Not if you let me go first, to see that it is quite safe."



walk to the rock?"

"Yes, if Maria pro
in that valley again."

"There will be no
unless you should aga
of countenance."

Even Maria Arnulph
friend was telling her
she was going to do.
little minx!" said the l
tude for my making Er
when you know he did r

But Miss Arnulph stil

"Well, I declare yo
I'll beg Ernest to be cr
you to marry him for t

go, they hardly gave him an opportunity of recalling it, for the next morning, Maria, Montfort, and Lion, were on their way to D——, travelling as fast as horses could take them.

The old shepherdess happened again to be alone, and was delighted to see Montfort, who had put on his peasant's dress; and also greeted Li most cordially, but did not know Maria in her female's clothes.

"Why have you not brought your dear little brother with you?" said the kind old dame, after making her best curtsey to the lady before her.

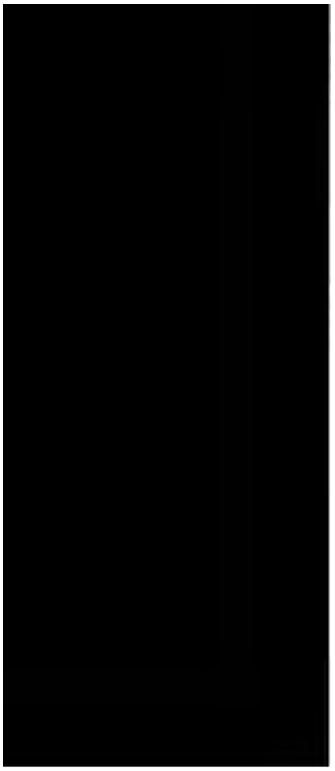
"And so I have, mother," replied Montfort.

"Where is he then?" said she, looking round her.

Montfort pointed to Maria, who at the same moment asked, "What, don't you know little Paolo, whom you were so kind to, mother?"

"Why, no, sure! Yes, 'tis! But it can't be!"

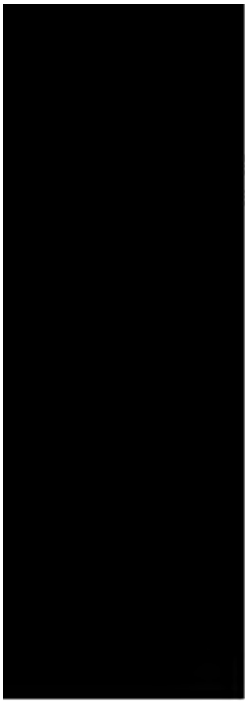
"It is indeed," returned Maria, taking her hand; and here followed an explanation. But when she was convinced on this point, they had only got



upon earth whether I choose it or no;
w, Charles, I might not choose it."
nonsense my wife can talk when she

o oblige her husband though, as he
not bear any one who always tries to
but what I mean is, that to-day you
s little sense, and as much nonsense,
have."
I promise only to think when it is
necessary; and to be as great a goose
le."
's a good boy!"
now they settled with the old dame that
re to go on their expedition up to the peaks
she was preparing dinner for them. And
the trio went, running and scrambling
Maria was out of breath, and her husband
obliged to put his arm about her waist and
her up the hill.

is not recorded that the old lady had made
a embrace again, (although she afterwards



Maria hardly waited
to be opened to rec
herself into them, an
beautiful wife to his
fondly and so long, t
what to make of it,
might receive some h
back at them, which
in a laugh.

Nevertheless, when t
the valley Maria ong
hush in, she said, "W
day remind me that I a

"Why! is Maria so

"No! but I am so
of forgetting it."

trast, for perhaps no scene through which they had passed, with the single exception of their hut, would have had a more powerful effect on them. To that hut they had formed many a scheme for going when the country became more settled; but at present Montfort would not have risked Maria there, even if they could have obtained their father's leave.

When they returned to the cottage, their hostess had got them a delicious dinner of mountain fare, to which they sat down with something of their their old appetites.

"Do you recollect, mother," said Maria, "that when last I was here, you said you thought I had a better appetite than my brother—and that it made us laugh a good deal? I mean to show you it is not a bit diminished!"

"And do you recollect," said Montfort, "what a scolding you gave me because I would not let little Paolo wash his feet?"

"Well! and I've a great mind to scold you

again," said she, laughing, "for it was very ill-natured."

"He was afraid," returned Maria, "it would be discovered we were in disguise, as my face and hands were stained."

"Ah, my dears! you might have trusted the old woman. But is this sweet young lady really our Young Queen?" said she, turning round to Montfort, as if she could hardly yet believe it. "Why, bless me, Miss, I ought to call you 'Your Majesty!'"

"No! you ought not to call me any such thing, mother! unless you wish me to think I have offended you."

"Why, I shall never be able to make my good man and the boys believe that such a thing has happened to us when they come home."

"I hope this will serve in some measure to convince them, mother!" said Maria, putting a purse of gold into the old dame's hands, "which you must accept for my sake; and you must let us

know what we can do to make you more comfortable and more happy."

Montfort was obliged to join his entreaties to Maria's to make her take the money, as she said it was happiness enough for her and hers to have relieved them in any respect. When they continued to insist on it, she asked with the greatest simplicity, "But, my dears! do you think you have got enough for yourselves? because you know you are only just beginning the world, and they say it requires a plenty of money to live down in the towns; and, may-be, when you come to have a family growing up about you——"

"No, no, dear mother!" hastily interrupted Maria, who did not seem to enjoy the speech near so much as Montfort did, "we have got plenty for ourselves; and you will make us unhappy if you do not take that, and let us know what we can do for your family."

"Oh, you can do nothing more! for neither of my boys wish to leave the mountains, as they have both got sweethearts here. This will

make Albert so happy, for he has long been promised to his cousin, but we were too poor to let them marry yet—but now we shall have plenty, and to spare."

"And do you wish him to marry?—do you approve of his choice?" asked Maria.

"I often tell him that she is too good for him."

"Ah! but I dare say she does not think so: you know women seldom value themselves high enough"—giving a significant glance at her husband.

I have often remarked how much more there is in the female character than in man's, of what some philosophers have been pleased to denominate selfishness—a sort of selfishness, however, that puts its opposite to the blush—which opposite is, a fine-spun citizen-of-the-world philanthropy, so drawn out, that it rests on all alike, and, alike, does good to none. I mean, that women apply their own situations to those about them, much more than men do; and, by their doing so,

sympathy, charity, and all manner of kindness, is called up in them for persons who are circumstanced like themselves. This feeling extends not only to situations similar to their own, but to those they are liable to be placed in—nay, to those which it was ever possible they should have been placed in: for which reason I never can join in the heartless laugh against old maids for their fondness for patronising Lying-in Societies. It proceeds from a feeling that does not deserve the laugh of every silly fool—that is, it would not, if such laugh could do any harm.

The moment any thing about love and marriage was mentioned, Maria became much more interested than she had been before, and asked a number of questions on the subject. Montfort also, I must acknowledge, although I have just been speaking rather in abuse of men, had so much of this woman's feeling in him, that he instantly resolved, even before he saw Maria's eagerness, to do every thing in his power to make the young couple happy—or miserable, as the case might be—



CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air
And life, that bloated ease can never hope to share."
BYRON.

As soon as Montfort and Maria were alone, the young wife said, "If we can make two other hearts—not as happy as ours, for that is impossible!—but happy, will it not add, if any thing can, to our own felicity?"

"Maria! you are, in truth, as you told the old lady just now—too good for me!"

"I am no such thing: and you know your feelings on the subject were exactly the same as mine, for I saw them in your face." When Montfort elevated his eyebrows, as much as to

say, "Did you indeed?" she added, "Ah, my Charles! I have read far dearer things there, and in this very place, too, when its owner little thought so: but can you guess why I wished so much to help to put away the dinner-things?"

"Yes! for the sake of looking rustic and cottage-like."

"If you had said 'housewife-like,' it would have been a better word; for in my first love-thoughts, it always used to be one of my most haunting fancies, to live in humble life with you, and be obliged to get my husband's dinner, and do all sorts of work for his comfort and happiness. And, only think! I used to live upon these fancies at a time when Charles had not one thought of me! for you know you were ungallant enough to let me fall in love first."

"I believe that must be a story, Maria! because I cannot now conceive such a thing as a time when I did not love you. How could I have lived?—how could I have breathed without it?"

"But there must have been such a time," said

Maria, laughing at his enthusiasm, "for there was a time when you had not seen me."

"That hardly proves it, my girl! (here Maria stared) for you will allow that I must always have been a visionary—(here Maria nodded assent); and when I first saw you, I only found the reality of what I had long seen and loved in my brightest, sweetest day-dreams"—(here Maria looked sulky.) "That ought to be very flattering, no doubt!" said she, "to be told I realise your *beau ideal;* but I beg you to understand I am not one bit flattered at it. I want no fine, visionary, unsubstantial love, from you; but a good, honest, hearty affection, that is much too strong to live or die from mere fancy."

"And have you got it?"

"Ay, thank Heaven! if ever mortal had!"

And Maria was silent for a few minutes. She then said, "But tell me, Charles! when were you first sure you loved my own real self? for I want to have nothing to say to your fine ideal ladies."

"That I cannot do, Maria! Love did not knock me down with a sledge-hammer; but he glid into my heart so quietly that I did not know he was there until I found I had no heart left. I do not deny that your beauty first attracted me, but it was the feminine sweetness with which you bore your hardships and misfortunes, which made me love you; though at what precise moment I cannot say: but this I know, that it must have been before the grand fight, for when I saw you seeking to save me at the risk of your own life, the feeling that was then in my heart was not a new feeling."

"Oh, then!" said Maria, looking quite disappointed, "I could not have loved you much before you loved me."

"And why do you wish to make out the contrary? I thought women never chose to do that."

"Nor should they, Charles! but my case is different from all others. I should deserve no credit for only loving you, when I saw you loved

me, as I am sure any woman in the world would have done that:"—(Montfort smiled, but nevertheless drew himself up an inch higher) "but it seems to me, that I owed you so much, I ought to have given you my heart first, without knowing that a return would be made for it: and so, I am sure, I did, whatever you may choose to say now."

"And do you think it was a gift worth having?"

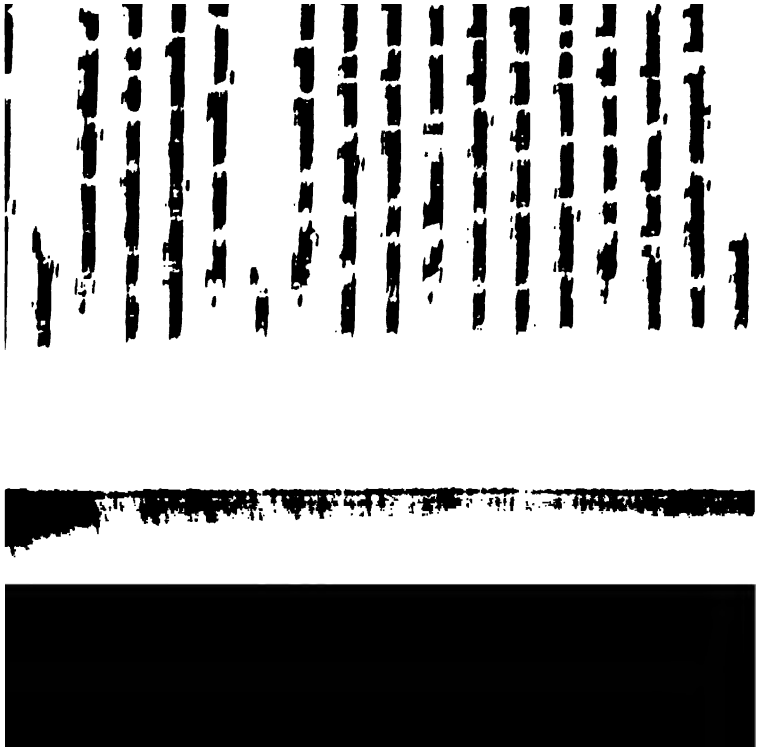
"Yes, I do! for you have taught me its value, by giving your own in return for it."

"You must prove you loved first, before you can assert that."

"I did," said she, quite fiercely.

Maria seemed now (to borrow a pretty saying from our transatlantic brethren. Can it be possible that this phrase and Washington Irving belong to the same land?) determined to "go the whole hog," for she entered so thoroughly into the spirit of ruralising, that she entreated Montfort to let them sleep at the cottage.

"Nonsense!" said Montfort, afraid to allow



speech, for you will not do so; but I know what you were going to say."

"I won't beg any more about it, but I wish such bad weather would come on that we could not go back to D——," replied Maria, in a tone which showed his laugh had taken effect.

And strange enough to say, Maria had her wish before long, although, at the time she spoke, there was no appearance of rain. Montfort also had his wish, for he was just as glad of the excuse as she was; and when he saw the nice clean coarse sheets upon the bed, and how comfortable the delighted old dame had made the son's room look, he had no one fear left about his wife's catching cold—the only thing he had really thought of, although he did not venture to tell her so, as she would have abused him so much, and overwhelmed him with so many reasons why the thing was impossible. I may as well inform my reader here, although it is somewhat out of place, that, on consulting the authorities, I do not find it mentioned that Montfort slept in the fire-place; which Maria

ought to have insisted on, in order to recall all their old associations. I am rather inclined to think Lion enjoyed that comfortable berth alone, as knowing that his mistress was now quite safe, he might have ventured to lie so far from her door; which, after all, was not more than two or three yards: and quite sure am I that, if so, he made a good use of it after the glorious scramble which he had amongst the rocks during the day, for, from his having been so long cooped up in a city, he had thought it necessary to take a double portion of exercise on this occasion, in order to make up lee-way.

In the evening, when seated in the chimney-

thinking you answered 'Yes' with all your heart."

"That, mother, I am sure I did, although he cannot tell how I found it out, for he had never told me so," said Maria, as Montfort drew her towards him and kissed her, not caring one bit about the old lady's presence. This made Maria exclaim, "For shame!" but, on being appealed to by Montfort, their hostess decided there was no shame in it—by which decision, although it was against her, Maria did not seem to think herself the least ill-treated; on the contrary, I should fancy, she took it to be as infallible as the Pope's, for whenever this little occurrence happened again, she never gave any more trouble with her appeals.

However, the old lady took her part on another subject, and said to her, "As I am an old married woman, and you are a very young one, I must give you some advice, and tell you how you are to manage your husband, so as always to have your own way."

"Oh, do!" said Maria, "for I assure you he is very hard to manage."

"Then you have only to attend to one thing—'never to contradict him.'"

"Why, then I shall always let him have his way."

"No such thing! you will always have yours if you attend to what I say. When men are contradicted, they only become more obstinate in the wrong; but when they appear to be given way to, they are easily coaxed into any thing."

Montfort thought this perfectly correct; and Maria said she would try the plan, but added, "If, however, my husband still will not be tractable, I will bring him here for you to give him another good scolding for me, as I am sure nobody else can do it so well."

"Don't you believe her, mother! she herself can scold as well as any body."

"Ah! my dears! I don't think you will have much scolding between you. If you continue to be good, you may depend you will continue to be

happy. But, my dear young lady, you are looking much better than I should have thought to find you; for it was not many months ago that my husband came home from D—— and told me our Young Queen was dying."

"And I believe he told you true, mother!"

"But what could have been the matter, as you look so well now?"

Maria leant her head upon Montfort's shoulder, who answered, "We thought we were to have been separated from each other for ever, mother."

"Then you were not much better, I reckon. Poor souls! but was this your father's doing?"

"Oh, no!" said Maria, with her head quite erect at the bare mention of such a thing; "my husband is the only person in the world my father ever wished me to marry. He prefers him as a son, to the greatest king upon earth. And he would have given up his throne for our sakes if I had not been allowed to be his wife without it."

"And so he ought, dear man!" said the old dame, kindling into enthusiasm; "and little would

he be fit to govern other people, had he not feeling enough to prefer his own child's happiness to every thing else in this world."

Maria and Montfort were delighted with the sentiment, and still more so with the unceremonious and *naïve* manner in which it was expressed.

"You must come and pay me a visit, and see my father," said the former, "for I am sure you would be a wonderful favourite with him."

"Ah! they would laugh at the old shepherdess in fine company down in the towns."

"Would they?" said Maria; "I should like to see them do so!"

And she looked as if she was ready to fight

"And so we will, mother," said Maria; "I 'll promise you that."

And now I must close this evening's conversation, for fear of putting my reader as sound asleep as was, long ere this, our friend Lion, although it did not really finish until quite late for mountain hours. But notwithstanding that Maria and her husband have retired to their humble but comfortable-looking bed-room, I cannot part with them altogether. Don't be alarmed, reader! I will only draw the curtain the least bit on one side in the world.

At this hour of the twenty-four it was Maria's habit to state all her little grievances, and to give her husband that sort of oration which I believe husbands in general call after the name of the canopy under which it is usually delivered. So fond was she of doing this, that it was quite a disappointment to her when she could not think of a fitting subject; and, strange to say, this was precisely Montfort's taste: and often, when she did not begin at her accustomed time, he

would ask, "Well, has my girl nothing to complain of to-night?" and if, after thinking awhile, she was obliged to confess that she had not, he would add, "then she is an ill-natured thing, and I won't love her—if I can help it."

But at present there was no occasion for his asking the question: "Now, my Charles!" said Mary, in that soft murmuring voice in which a woman makes her dear complaint when she knows she is too well loved for her slightest tone not to have—

"A power.
Passing the strength of storms in their most desolate

"What did she mean then?"

"Why, she meant that she had so long had watching her bed one whom she was foolish enough to doat upon—but whom she should not doat on, he treats her so ill—that she could not sleep happily if she knew he was not near her."

"But now my girl must explain what I chose to think she meant."

"No, I shan't do that; but don't you own that it was too bad of you?"

"And can she forgive such wickedness? or, is it past that? Can she forgive it, and will she promise to sleep as sweetly in the offender's arms as when he watched her slumbers, stedfastly and silent, like a star? Will she promise this, or must he get out of bed, and sit by her pillow all night, to please her?"

"Why, I could not let him do that, bad as he is, for fear he should catch cold. You know that is my only reason, don't you?"

"I don't know any such thing; I know the contrary. Am I to have another lecture for that?"

"No, I am afraid of teaching him to tell stories, if I scold him when he speaks the truth."

The next day, after having luxuriated on curds and whey, and fresh flowers, and pure air, and magnificent views, and all that makes up a morning amidst mountains—after having taken an affectionate leave of their dear old woman, renewed their promise of visiting her every year, and received hers that the young couple should be married as soon as ever they wished it, Maria and Montfort were going down the hill, still undecided on a point which they had often debated—whether to visit the scene of Lion's heroism or no. They had purposely avoided it on the previous day, as they knew that at all events it would make them serious; which, although by no means always



hand was armed; nor had her husband any on her account, for he thought he and Li, in such a cause, would be a match for any thing that could come against them; but they were in doubt whether they should receive most pain or pleasure from going there. "It seems," said Montfort, "almost an injustice to dear Li not to do so. I wonder if he would recognise the spot?" This overcame any little reluctance that had remained, and decided the case, and in the most convenient way, too, as a carriage had been ordered to meet them just below the spot on the previous evening; to which order Maria, however, had added a secret clause, viz. "that if they did not come at a reasonable hour, it was to return for them the next day." This Montfort was not aware of until he urged the alarm it might create, as an objection to their staying the night at the cottage.

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were walking on, and talking, they were suddenly alarmed by an angry growl from the dog, who, with his hair bristled up, and his tail lashing his sides, stood a little way before them. It was so sudden, that Maria could not help starting; but she was instantly re-assured when she felt Montfort's arm around her. For a moment, the bearing of the latter assumed that bold, danger-confronting air, which had so much struck Maria once before; the next, he appeared somewhat ashamed of his grand looks, for he immediately discovered the cause of their alarm to be only Li's announcement that he had recognised the spot, and that he had been the first of the party to do so. But that moment was not lost upon Maria.

As soon as Montfort spoke to Li, he trotted back, and then round them once or twice, still growling defiance. When Maria called him to her, and caressed him, he wagged his tail, but kept his ears erect, looking proudly about him on every side, nor could they pacify him for a long time.

They now easily traced out the different objects which had struck them. "'Tis strange," said Montfort, "how clear and perfect the recollection of every thing is in my mind, where one would expect nothing to remain but indistinct images of horror! There I first observed the ground trampled; there saw hair upon the bushes; there I stood when I called to you; and here I found the pool of blood—and, great God of Heaven! thought it was yours!"

It will not seem strange to many, that Maria was less affected at the scene of her danger than Montfort. Had they been transferred to the spot where he was wounded, their feelings would have been exactly reversed. I do not mean that her heart did not overflow with thankfulness for her wonderful protection, but that it was of a far different nature to what it would have been, had Montfort there undergone a similar danger, and experienced a similar mercy.

Maria then pointed out the path by which she had brought Li up the rock to where Montfort

found them—Li all the time giving signs, not to be misunderstood, that he recognised every spot. Here they sat down; and the hero of the scene had to undergo many embracings and huggings, for they tried, by every means they could think of, to make him understand that such he was; and they were fanciful enough to think they had succeeded. "Look at her, Li!" said Montfort, holding his head towards Maria's face, and pointing at her,—"you saved her for me!"—and again were both hugged together to his bosom for the hundredth time.

At length, Montfort said, "But, my own! is Li the only one to whom we should feel grateful in this place?" Now, for this question, or something like it, the wife had anxiously waited for some time. The feeling was in her bosom long before, but she did not mention it in her usual manner, because she so much wished her husband to do it first. Never—never did she feel so sensibly the bliss of being loved, as when she knew Montfort was thanking God for the gift which He had given

him.—I am inclined to think Maria was right in one of her reasons for wishing to revisit this scene —"that it would make them more thankful for the happiness they now enjoyed, and, therefore, better."

But even here they could find a subject for mirth—ay, and laugh about it too!—nor did they laugh the less because they had just been praying.

And why should this not have been the case? Were they to be satisfied or dissatisfied at having done what they knew was right, and felt was soothing? It was this which I most admired in them, and would fain have most imitated by others —that although they were both sincerely religious, they never thought it necessary to look gloomy and forbidding on that account—on the contrary, on that account, they thought it necessary to look the reverse. To them it would have appeared more intelligible, had their natural dispositions happened to be the opposite of what they were, to have affected mirth and joyous happiness, than, their feelings being light and buoyant, to have put on

sadness. Oh surely, surely, they who do so, forget how much it is our duty to win each other to be good.

I am by no means of opinion that conscientious puritans will not have their reward; I am convinced they will, because they are conscientious—but I think them sadly mistaken. I look upon it that the good, who have the power, should consider it a duty to spread and multiply innocent attractions and amusements around them, and to partake of them—not only in order to show others that it is the happiest as well as the wisest plan to be like them, but because, by so doing, they save many from committing sin; for the human mind craves so much after entertainment, that where it has no opportunity of obtaining it innocently, it will seize it guiltily.

"But," say the over-righteous, "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of joy." And so it is, for deeper purposes; but it is nowhere said that we are to "live" in the house of mourning, and in it

alone. And the Divine Author of our religion, himself, has left us the example of going to marriage-feasts, nor did he ever object to any whom he found there *because* they went to them.

I have no desire to pass off what I have now said as a discovery of my own, for it is what has been constantly told us by the best and wisest of mankind; but really, from the number of austere though worthy persons, one sees, it might easily be imagined it had only just been made.

And why, let me ask, (for it is a subject which I have so much at heart that I cannot help returning to it,) should man be the only created being who is to be deprived of joy and gladness in this world? If they study nature, or read Paley, (which is pretty much the same thing,) they will find what a large portion of delight a beneficent Creator, it is reasonable to believe, has bestowed on each of His inferior animals. And should they try to parry this argument by saying, "that they, unlike man, have no other happiness to look forward to,"—this answer will not serve to get

over the many instances Paley so clearly points out, in which the Creator must have had in view, not only the happiness, but, so to speak, the very amusement of the human race.

Even inanimate nature is against them. To harmonise with them, the flower should sigh, and the tree should moan, and the growing corn should cry, "Alack! alack! I 'm only born to be devoured, and sure to be *thrashed* into the bargain."

To be serious, (for perhaps it is hardly allowable to treat such a subject with levity, as I have done,) this constant groaning in the presence of that beneficent Being who has given us, even in this world, so many more smiles than tears, always appears to me like reflecting on His judgment, for having made His own Creation what, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, He was pleased to make it—it seems, although it is meant to be the reverse of wicked, akin to the speech of the impious wretch who said, "That if the God of the Universe had consulted him, he would have told Him how to plan His work much better." I

wish I could, as an Irish friend of mine once observed to me, *oblige* every body to read Paley *voluntarily*, and when they began to forget him, to read him again,—I am sure there would then be much more religion, and much less bigotry in the world.*

So far were my hero and heroine from thinking it proper to be morose for religion's sake, that, as I have already asserted, they never laughed with more delight than when they had just been praying—which assertion I might have spared myself the trouble of making, had my reader seen them at the spot where Montfort so misbehaved about Maria's trousers.

It was by no means requisite for Maria to speak

* Some things in the puritan system I do not understand. The same persons who would dine or spend an evening with a small party, would think a large one a sin, and a ball an abomination. Thus to associate with the same individuals by half dozens, is right; but, by dozens, not right. I should like to know the exact number where innocence ends, and crime begins; for it must be, according to them, a mere matter of figures. Is the multiplication-table, then, to be our code of morality?

I have known one who would go to a dance, but would

of the subject directly, to recall it to her companion's mind; but she alluded to it with a laugh which had hardly time to dimple her rosy cheeks, before Montfort's well-bronzed ones were moved to a most inelegant degree. "Now, was it not very impudent of you to think of doing such a thing?" said she.

"Not at all! and I would do the same again upon a like occasion."

"Then I would slap your face well for you; though it would not be quite so bad now I am your wife. But I must acquit you of any intentional impertinence then, for a more innocent stare than you had when you looked up in my face, I never in my life saw."

"Ah! it is very well to laugh at it now, but I

not dance,—another who would play music for others to dance to, but would not join in the dance,—and a third, who would dance at a private ball, but not at a public.

All this, to me, is unintelligible. I consider every amusement innocent at which you may *easily* be innocent if you please: the *possibility* of turning it to guilt does not deprive it of this character, because it is very possible to do that which is not innocent in any place whatsoever, even in a church.

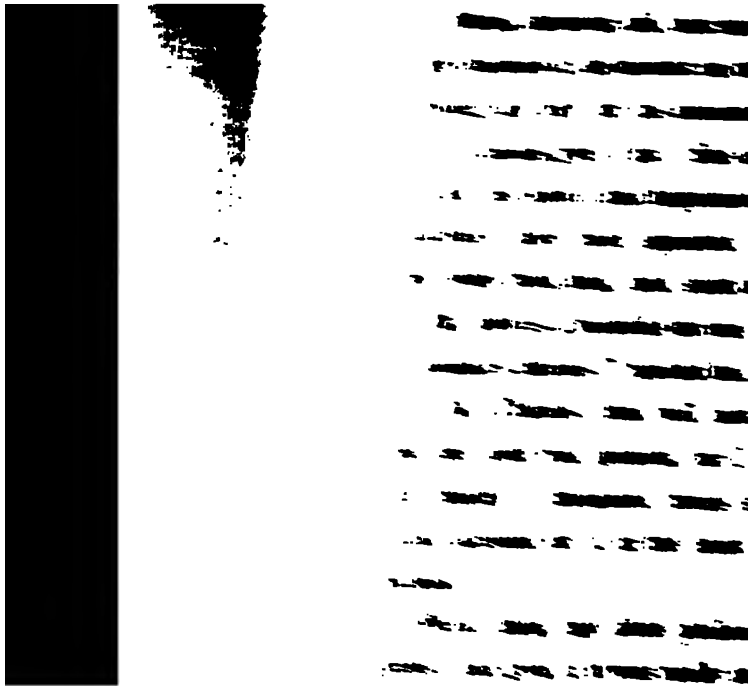
was in a dreadful fright." And they squeezed each other's hands in a most lover-like style.

Although Montfort's tragedy look, when Li alarmed them, was observed by Maria, it was not until they had been some time on the road home that she mentioned it. "Charles," said she, "look at me. Now look as fierce as you can." He made up a face that might have frightened the very Saracen's Head on Snow Hill. "No, no, —I don't want a caricature."

"What is the meaning of this fancy?"

"Why," replied Maria, "I have to-day seen the look which, if it did not win my heart, told me it was won."

When Maria had explained how forcibly she had been that morning reminded of his appearance as their enemies were coming to attack them, she added, "Until that moment I thought whatever spoke of blood must be disgusting, as well as terrible; but the generous resolve to die in defence of a weak being like me, made it less terrible than beautiful. But what, in the name of goodness, is the man blushing about?"



explained to him, and when it was free to speak again, he said, "I see I must not dare to doubt it! and I think I should be little inclined to do so, if I did dare"—at which the hand, whose owner now seemed quite pacified, resumed its original position, and Montfort continued, "The only guess I can give on the subject is, that woman, feeling her defenceless state, is naturally inclined to love that most which she thinks can defend her best."

"I have thought of that myself; but how can that be, when (I may say so to you) I had not at the moment one thought of self?"

"That was proved to me indeed! but, if He who made us has, for his own wise purposes, placed this feeling generally in woman's bosom, it may be felt even where there is such perfect forgetfulness of self as there was in my own girl at that moment." Maria, in her turn, blushed at her husband's praise, just as she used to do twelve months ago, when he wasn't her husband."

Both husband and wife always chose to travel with postilions, because, when Maria was in her

[redacted] if there was a chance stuck upon the box, she was obliged to keep her eyes constantly fixed upon him, to see that he did not look round: and when it happened that he did so, up went her head from Montfort's shoulder, and down went his arms, as if they had been doing something improper. But now, not he himself, on his near-side seat, in the bottom of the carriage, was sitting more quietly and comfortably than Maria, for, having no coachman, she could lay her head wherever she pleased: and, under pretence of her knees being cold, she had put her hands into Montfort's. "I wonder what his Imperial Majesty, dear man! as our good old friend called

[redacted]

that I can make all of your sex whom I ought to have any influence over, do whatever I please?"

"Indeed, I believe you can! But yet, I used to have my own way sometimes, in our wanderings."

"Ay, but you were only a lover at that time! and I think any woman must be very silly who cannot manage a husband better than a lover, whatever the world may say to the contrary. Besides, I don't recollect that you ever had your own way even then, unless fears on my account made you desperate, and therefore determined."

"Why, no! To say the truth, I do not recollect that I ever had. But this does not agree with the story you told the old lady, about my being so hard to manage."

"Oh! there was no harm in telling a little story as I knew neither of you believed I meant what I said. Hard to manage, my poor Charles? Why, you are such a goose, that I may do whatever I choose with you; and I do not always exert all my power, out of sheer pity for you."

"And Heaven grant," said Montfort, (squeezing

what I have over and over again said, that Maria was far from being a heroine—that if a Queen, she was no tragedy Queen: placed in situations to call forth all the strength of her character, she could not help sometimes looking heroic; but it was always much against her will. And let not any simpering Miss, who at present seems to think, and perhaps really does think, of little else than dress and flirting, triumph over her too much on this account, for she may yet live to wonder at her own exploits. Great occasions prove that to be in us (that is, in some of us) which we little dream of in our lighter hours.

But it is not virtue only that is brought forth in its greatest power by trials and sufferings; they have the same effect on some sorts of talent, especially the poetic, as Tom Moore tells us in speaking of Byron. Is it necessary then, that a poor genius should be "sear'd by the autumn blast of grief," before he can sing, as a young bear must be put on a hot griddle before he will dance? I hope, however, in spite of his being a Whig, that Tom Moore's own happiness contradicts his assertion.

CHAPTER IX.

"I am a fool
To weep at what I'm glad of."

SHAKSPEARE.

M[illegible] had one day been out shooting for many hours, and came home, he would not acknowledge, tired, when his wife told him so; but,



After dinner Montfort was very sleepy indeed, and lay upon a sofa with his head on his usual pillow on such occasions. But before Maria permitted this, she did get a sort of confession from him, that he was tired; which, however, he afterwards declared had been extorted by violence.

"You shall not have your pillow unless you tell the truth, and own you are fatigued."

"I will have my own pillow," said he, with his eyes shut, and his mouth scarcely open.

"No! not unless you tell the truth. I will not have any naughty child's head on my lap."

"Give me my pillow, and I'll tell any thing."

"Then say, 'I am tired.'"

"'Then say, I am tired,'" said he, repeating her words, and at the same time pulling her down upon the sofa, and putting his head in her lap, partly by force.

"That's only half a confession. But I cannot have the heart to turn you off now," replied Maria, as she leant down and kissed his forehead.

maintained she had a right to flirt with her own husband as much as she pleased.

* * * * *

But Maria and Montfort did not, because they could not with propriety, live so much to themselves as might be fancied from what I have as yet said of their married life. They were not slow to acknowledge all they owed to those who had entered so enthusiastically into their cause; and their gratitude to the people they knew was most pleasingly shown by their being often amongst them. And if they sometimes went to the public promenades of an evening, when they would much

her hands upon his head; and when he had finished, rewarded him by slipping her arms down round his neck, and giving him a kiss: "You are my own dear, good child, now! shall I carry my babe to bed?"

When Maria was left alone with her book, that book was quite as much neglected as before. Often did she repeat to herself, "Oh! this is the very happiness we wished for!—the very happiness we wished for!—what a blessed, blessed change! Now, in his absence, I am at peace and scarcely less happy than in his presence, because I have the heavenly certainty that that presence will soon again give me the only joy I ever wish for:—were ever two people so happy before?"

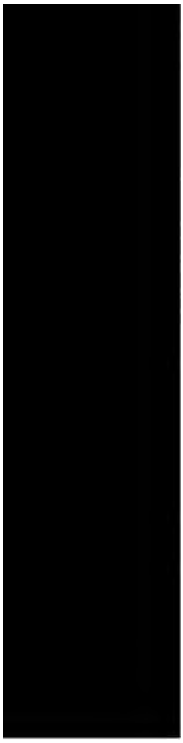
Whilst Maria was thus soliloquising her own happiness, her father came in and found her with tears in her eyes. It did not need a second glance to tell him they were not tears of sorrow: "What has my thankless girl found to cry about now?" asked he.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]





"And if it is the nature of man to find fault, pray what fault does your husband find with you?"

"He may tell you himself, if he pleases; but my private opinion is, his sole cause of complaint is precisely the same as yours—that, whenever he is in a scolding humour, I give him the trouble of racking his brains to find out a cause for doing so, because I am so good, that it really is a matter of difficulty to discover one."

Even when they did feel a disinclination to go into public, the effort of going was the only disagreeable part of it; for once there, the kind, the protecting smiles, Maria got from all ranks, never failed to delight Montfort; nor was she less gratified to find her preserver as highly valued by them as herself.

One evening when they were sitting in the public gardens, in the midst of the crowd, they overheard a baker's wife say, "Our dear little Queen looks quite happy since *we* gave her the husband of her heart."

"Yes, God bless her!" returned her beau, the keeper of a beer-shop in the suburbs;—"and I should like to know to whom we could have given her that deserved her so well, as to him who saved her for us?"

"I declare, Maria!" whispered Montfort, "I have a great mind to run and kiss the dear old fat lady."

"Then if you do, I'll positively kiss her beau."

But the conversation of the pair did not end there. The beau proceeded to say, "If there was nothing else in their favour, they deserved each other for their constancy."

"Yes, that they did; and I am sure I don't wonder at their falling in love—indeed I would not have answered for my own heart, had I been in her Majesty's situation."

Maria would have had a good laugh, if she had dared, at the idea of her Montfort making such a conquest; but nevertheless she was gratified—nor is there any princess in any land who would not

be so at knowing that every dairy-maid thought the object of her choice worthy of being loved.

These public exhibitions were less distasteful to them because they were never, except on very particular occasions, obliged to go in state. The Emperor did not wish it, and the people were pleased to see the young wife and her husband walking about in the midst of them, with no other attendant than Li; who, with that part of the population under twelve years old, seemed to be the principal personage of the group.

Sometimes this scanty train for royalty was increased by the presence of Charles and Miss Arnulph; and if this did not often happen, it was because Maria and Montfort had not forgotten, that however much they might prefer private to public walks now, they were still more anxious for them before they were married.

The frequent dropping of all form was not an innovation on what the imperial family had been accustomed to do, for it had always been the policy of the sensible princes of that House to retain the

power they considered it necessary they should have, as well for the good of the country they governed as for their own safety, but to carefully avoid making an uncalled-for exhibition of it to the people. If, however, there was nothing new in this part of the affair, the seeing a married couple so constantly together was only known to have happened once before since the empire commenced—when Maria's mother was a young and happy wife; and the consequence was, that it became quite the fashion for wives to love their own husbands, and for husbands to love their own wives; which, to many, appeared rather strange at first.

On the anniversary of Maria's escape, it was thought necessary to give a grand dinner and ball; rather to the annoyance of both husband and wife, and father too; for they wished to have spent the day quite in their family circle. Maria's fancy, to be sure, travelled off to their dear old woman of the mountains—to their hut, to the lake, and to a dozen other places where she would fain have passed the time in company with only three com-

panions:—but, to tell the truth, it was easier for her fancy to travel over mountains, than for herself to do so in her present state.

When this day had passed, and "the feast was over in Branksome Hall," the chief hero of that feast felt as unlike a hero as might well be—was actually afraid to meet his wife—who waited for him, rather wondering he did not come to her: but he had no notion of it.

After trying to walk along a straight line running through the pattern of the carpet, in which operation, from over-anxiety not to do so, he tripped a little, Montfort shook his head sorrowfully, and said, with a most doleful accent, "Oh! this will never do!"

He then looked into a mirror, which, from his standing beside it instead of directly in front, gave him an incorrect reflection of his face, the mouth being twisted sadly awry. At sight of this dreadful apparition, he exclaimed in agony, "Tipsy, did I say! why I'm drunk, positively drunk! Good Heavens! what shall I do? conceal it from

Maria? impossible! any one not himself drunk, would see it a mile off: why, the very boys in the street would hoot at me; and I know Maria won't go to sleep until I come. And what must a woman—that is, a decent woman—think of a man that is drunk, horribly drunk? why, that he is a brute! nay, worse than a brute! it would be doing an injustice to a pig even, to compare them together. I am never, at the best of times, worthy of Maria. Then, what am I now? Upon my word, that's a pleasant thought! I'll go to the Emperor, to Ernest: but that would only make others that I love, despise me too. Very pleasant, again! I believe I was tipsy once before; but, oh, bless me, it was nothing like this!—nothing! I was reasonable then—I could even talk; but, now, it is quite different! or, at least, I can only 'just speak, and that's all.' Couldn't I stay here all night? and perhaps Maria would think I fell asleep by mere accident, or from fatigue."

From the foregoing string of sentences, uttered in rather a torrent, for one who could "just speak

and that's all," I must extract the truth for my reader; and it amounted to this:—Montfort had not, upon such an occasion, been able to avoid drinking a few glasses of wine more than usual: they had not really made him tipsy in the slightest possible degree; but they had made him fancy himself so, which was just as bad.

As the bright idea entered his head, that Maria might not take the trouble to send to see what had become of him if he did not go to her, he heard a light step coming up the room; and the mirror, which had discomposed him so much already, showed him his wife advancing towards him, and, to his utter confusion, with a face nearly as distorted as his own had appeared to be.

"Why, how is this? I'm sure Maria can't be tipsy too?"

I will not aver that Montfort brought the idea out quite so much as I have done; but, however great might have been his wonder, it was put an end to by a tap upon the shoulder, which made him turn round his own rueful countenance, and dis-





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cover that Maria's was not the least out of the way, either from drink or any other cause.

"What makes you so moody? One would think you did not like our gaiety,—perhaps not even the occasion of it!" said Maria.

"Upon my word, they'd think very right!" replied Montfort, his comprehension of her meaning stopping short at that part of her sentence which struck most upon his present thoughts; a circumstance not uncommon with persons of headlong feelings.

"Well!" returned Maria, with a laugh, knowing he had not understood her, "there is no fear of your spoiling me with flattery to-night:" but seeing Montfort did not join in her merriment, she got serious too.

"Maria! now, do not be alarmed," said he, looking in her face in a most alarming manner, as he took her hand; "do not be frightened, I entreat you! but, I believe, I am tipsy."

It is not quite clear Montfort expected his wife to faint on this occasion, or that he was annoyed



each off their dressing-rooms, there were also two small bed-rooms, in which were beds only large enough for one person. These were intended, I suppose, in case of quarrels, or sickness, or of inclination leading them to prefer sleeping alone. I cannot say either of them had ever before had the slightest chance of being occupied; but, to-night, Montfort insisted on going to his; and Maria at length, like a good wife, did recollect that she had promised to obey. Nevertheless, this freak appeared so very unreasonable and ill-timed, that she could not help saying, "A pretty way this is of spending such an anniversary!" but when she saw the pain her speech gave Montfort, she could have bitten her tongue off; and she threw her arms about his neck, and continued, "Well, my own goose! go to bed, (though you are not one bit tipsy!) and I will so laugh at you to-morrow, for your foolish fancy!"

Montfort did as he was bidden; and soon after Maria followed. She first, however, went into his room, to see if he were asleep, and perhaps

with some other little design in her head; (but of that I say nothing!) for she looked quite disappointed when she perceived he did not stir, although she passed the light before his eyes two or three times. She then kissed a hand that lay outside the bed-clothes, and went off to her own bed in a very bad temper.

Now, all this had been a great temptation to Montfort, for he was no more asleep than I am; but he had determination enough to feign being so, and to let Maria go away under that impression. Asleep, indeed! — he thought he should never go to sleep again! and he lay abusing himself, and vowing that the thing was impossible, until he was quite sound.

When Maria lay down, she remained tolerably quiet for some time, but then began tossing and tumbling about, and kicking and fretting, until at last she grumbled forth, "What nonsense it was! he was no more tipsy than I am: besides, if he had been, am I not his wife, for better for worse? so he had no right to turn me out

of his bed. Oh, come! he did not do that! but he turned himself out of mine; which is just the same thing! but then, dear fellow! it was, he said, because he was unworthy of me: but that 's all nonsense; and so I 'll let him see." And without saying another word (principally because she had nobody to say another word to, for when she had, and was in earnest upon any subject, she seldom missed the opportunity) she bounced out of her own bed in the dark, and, softly opening the door, crept into Montfort's without waking him—lay down upon the hard edge of the mattress quite contentedly, and was soon sound asleep.

After a long nap, Montfort's hand happened to come in contact with something neither so hard or so cold as the bed-post; and it might have done mischief, for Maria, knowing, I suppose, that she was disobeying orders, gave such a start, that she was near tumbling off the little perch she had had to balance herself on; though, in truth, there was no great chance of her falling when Montfort's arm was so near her.

"Are you displeased with me?" said Maria.

"Displeased with you!—but yes, I am! for your goodness to me makes me think how very ill I have behaved to you."

"Do not be so absurd, Charles! or you will put me quite in a rage!!!"

Notwithstanding it is the fashion to talk about their charitable feelings, I maintain that women are the most merciless set in the world, for they never achieve a victory, but they immediately proceed to torture the vanquished—like so many Mohawks or Cherokees. And thus, the moment Montfort had surrendered at, or rather without, discretion, Maria began, in the usual style: "Now, were you not very cruel to me to turn me out of your bed for nothing?"—(The little story-teller!—why, she said herself, not ten minutes ago, that she knew this was not the case!)

"Oh, Maria! is that the term you should use?"

"Well! to send me into bed alone, then, when you knew I could not sleep without you!"

"But what was my motive?"

"How can I tell what it was?—to get rid of me, I suppose!"

"You know whether it was or no; so tell the truth."

"How should I know the truth? you don't love me, or you would not have done it."

"You know that I did it because I love you so much."

"A pretty way that is of showing it!"

"You know it was because I love you so truly, that I could not bear to hold you in my arms at a time when I knew myself to be unworthy of you."

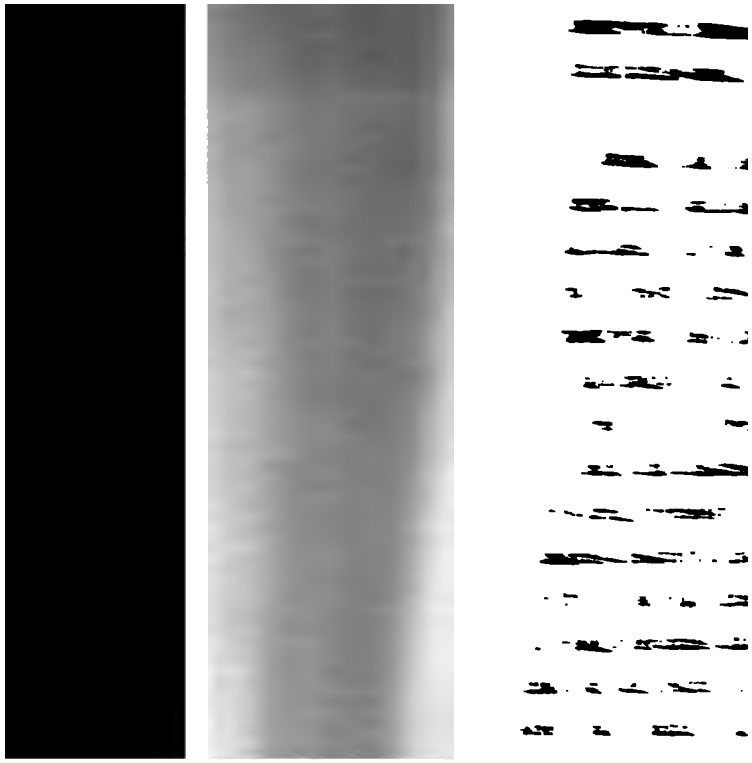
"Then, at that rate, if I am to believe you, I should never be in your arms at all, for you are always telling me you are unworthy of me."

"But then Maria, at other times, tells me, this is not true—tells me that I am worthy of her; which she could not in conscience do when she knew me to be tipsy."

"Yes I could, even then."

"No, she could not—for she must never say any thing that approaches in the slightest degree to what she knows to be an untruth."

"What?" said Maria, not liking the doctrine at all in this very extended sense, "am I never to be allowed to tell my Charles he does not love me, when I know, all the time, that he loves me a thousand times better than I deserve?"



great deal of walking exercise was ordered, which Montfort attended to with so much zeal, that she at last declared she believed he did not mean to let her sit down at all, but to make her a sort of land-flying Dutchman.

In fact, quizzing her husband quite kept up her own spirits—not that they would have been liable to fail had she had no much excitement. "I shall begin to think I really am of some value if you make such a fuss about me," said Maria.

Montfort could not help saying, with a most provoking look, "Beginning to think, Maria!"

"Now, Sir, I am not inclined to have any of your impudence to-day—and if you give me more of it, I will be unwell immediately; and then you must say, and do, whatever I like."

"Well, if you will promise not to look pale, I will not only say and do, but also think, whatever you please."

"Then I please that you forthwith think this, —that I never had a very good opinion of myself until about twenty months ago, when I acquired such from the worst of all possible reasons—seeing

how much I was valued by one who is of no sort of value himself."

If the reader cannot guess what has been the matter with Maria all this time, I would not tell him for the world.

* * * *

Women, like decoy-ducks, when themselves caught, act with zeal against their former friends and allies; nor was Maria an exception to this rule. Before Ernest ventured to press his suit further with Miss Arnulph, he asked her mistress if she thought "the lady was yet convinced that he loved her for herself, and for herself alone!" To which that mistress, instead of giving way to the strong propensity she always felt to laugh at a manifest absurdity, replied, with great demureness, "Why, I fear not, Ernest! that is, I don't doubt her being convinced that you love her, but I do not think she can return it, for I remark, whenever I abuse you, (which I do very often,) she always defends you; but when I praise you, (which I do very seldom,) she immediately runs away. Now this convinces me that she cannot bear you, but

only just defends you from a mere sense of justice, and nothing else, or why should she run away?"

"God bless her! she is an angel."

"What! for running away the moment you are praised? Well, I declare it is very easy to be an angel. I shall make all little girls of my acquaintance such, at a much earlier age than I was, by telling them to skip off like antelopes the moment a lover's name is mentioned. You see, Ernest, I might praise you oftener, perhaps, but I really cannot afford to lose Maria's services and society so frequently."

"I am sure you would do whatever is good, and whatever is kind to me."

"Why, I have not been married so long as to have forgotten who did every thing in his power to help me to my husband; and when I cease to remember it, I think it will be a sign that that husband and I wish ourselves unmarried."

"Your Majesty never forgets any one's merit, whatever it may be, except your own."

"Come, Ernest, that speech is too much like

what little dapper Count Arnheim would make—it neither becomes my friend, Maria Arnulph's friend, nor, above all, my husband 's earliest friend; and I won't have any more such from you, Mr. Ernest—I would much rather have something in the style of old rough Count Dornberg's approving looks, which always seem to me to say, 'You are a tolerably good girl, after all, in spite of what they do to spoil you.'"

"Ay, but," replied Ernest, not much liking Maria's comparison, "that disgusting Arnheim would make such a speech whether he thought it true or no: you know I should not."

"Worse and worse; but you cannot make me vain; for, whatever you may say, I know my chief merit with you will remain, the being Maria Arnulph's friend."

"No! it is not your chief merit; but certainly it draws my feelings towards you more than any thing else could."

"Now you are the honest old Count again; and, to reward you, I tell you, you shall have my consent as soon as you choose to ask it."

"Oh, that I were as sure of another lady's consent!"

"And what makes you fear it? Have you and Charles been out listening to any more owls' hooting?"

"No!" replied Ernest, smiling, "and if all the owls in the world hooted in my ears at once, I would not believe one of them whilst your voice bids me to hope. But do you think Miss Arnulph is convinced I love her for herself, and for herself alone?"

"If she says she is not, don't you believe her, for I think I should myself have been very likely to tell a story in a similar case. And do you really suppose, a woman who herself loves, is very hard to be convinced on such a point?"

"Then the only doubt that remains is, as to her loving."

"That she has owned herself, like a noble girl, as she is; and it is much greater impertinence in you to disbelieve her word than to believe it."

"And your Majesty knows I hate the very thoughts of being impertinent to a lady."

"Then what do you fear?"

"As I am determined not to tell you an untruth, I must not say that I have the slightest possible doubt of possessing her heart; but you are aware I promised to wait until she was convinced that she has mine—whole and undivided."

"And how do you intend to find out whether she is so or no, unless you ask her? Do you expect her to bawl out before the whole court, 'Ernest, I am quite convinced?'"

Ernest admitted that, however anxious he was to hear these words, he did suppose it likely they would be proclaimed from the house-top."

"Then, perhaps, you think you lack opportunity to ask the question in private?"

"Nay, I have too many opportunities, and I miss them all from being so much taken up in debating which is the best."

"Shall I tell you the truth, Ernest? The earliest opportunity is the best."

"Oh! but——"

"Oh, but? What do you mean by 'Oh, but!'

I declare you modest lovers are the greatest plagues in the world to poor women."

"Does your Majesty speak from experience?"

"If," replied her Majesty, laughing, "you were only half as impudent to Maria Arnulph as you are to me, I will answer for it you would not be in doubt long; and I won't forgive it in my case, unless you are so forthwith."

"And what punishment will my being modest bring upon me?"

"Why, I will not either praise you or blame you to Maria (for I do not believe the girl cares which it is, as long as I speak of you), and then she will really think you are in disgrace with me."

"And so, shall I be in disgrace with her!"

"Why, I will not answer for that; but I am sure I shall."

"Well, then, under your Majesty's gracious patronage, I will be impudent on the very first possible occasion."

"Never was speech made more apropos, for here comes Maria, and I am going away."

"Oh, are you?" said Ernest, as if he regretted it—nor am I sure that he did not do so for the moment."

"Yes," replied Maria, "and I hold you to your promise." But seeing that all his confidence had left him, that he looked pale, and was agitated to a distressing degree, she whispered, as she left the room, "Don't be foolish, my dear friend!"

Miss Arnulph went hastily up to her lover with far more than her usual confidence; but one glance at her face sufficed to tell him it was that additional confidence which grief makes us place in all whom we know to feel kindly towards us; for the mind in this state, like the body sinking under an oppressive weight, grasps eagerly at whatever may support it. This glance, too, instantly made Ernest forget his own fears.—"Maria in grief! and at a moment when I had determined to ask her the question on which all my happiness depends!"

Even this speech did not overcome Maria's confidence, but her confidence rose above it; and

she replied, with her face averted, "Oh, Ernest! indeed you need not ask it. But," she was going to add, "I have great cause for grief now."

This, however, could not but be interrupted; nor, although most anxious to know the cause of her sorrow, did he permit her to proceed until she did so with her head leaning, making no effort to move, on him who was henceforth to be her support for ever.

She then continued,—"My poor old nurse! one of the few upon earth who loved the orphan!"

"Maria!" exclaimed Charles, reproachfully, pressing her still closer to his heart.

"That is, indeed, ingratitude for what I do possess;" returned she. "But she has just died so suddenly that I could hardly reach her in time to receive her blessing."

"And a blessing it will be to thee, my own! for, like her child, she had goodness that always brings a blessing with it."

* * * *

Miss Arnulph's grief for the humble but faithful and affectionate friend who had shown her so much kindness in her earliest years, when the death of both her parents made it most needed, was truly sincere; but no one will suppose it to have been overwhelming or immoveable. She had, for her stay, that which the heart most longs for, however we may school it—one with whom to "cast in her lot," for joy or sorrow; or, rather, one who is to be to us joy or sorrow—a destiny. She had, too, those who were more than friends; for ever since her father died fighting his country's battles, the Emperor had treated her as his child. From the Young Queen, for the purpose of her education, she had been separated until the former returned to V——, with a heart too full at first to admit any other feeling; but even into that heart Miss Arnulph had at length forced herself by her affectionate attentions, and now she lived there rather as a younger sister than in any humbler situation; for she who was so apt to forget her rank with all others, was not likely to re-

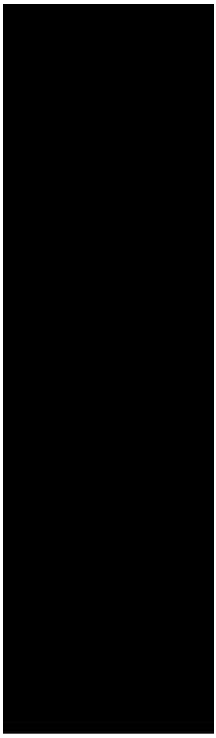
member it with the orphan whom her father had placed under her especial care—with the attendant who had watched her in her sorrows so affectionately—with one who was soon to be the wife of her husband's dearest friend. Besides, we all like to patronise now and then; and Maria (that is, *our* Maria—not Ernest's,) felt quite conceited when she saw the girl's face glow as she showed her any mark of approbation and attachment. I should like to have petted her myself in the way that was very common with Maria—to have kissed her pretty cheek—but I must not say so for fear —— should find it out.

* * * * * *

"You are an ugly, cross, ill-contrived, good-for-nothing little thing! and exactly like your mother; and therefore I can't abide you!"

"Now, I won't have my poor babe called such names," said Maria.

"Her babe, indeed!" said Montfort, holding them both out at arms' length for a moment, to



— — — — — — — — — — very shy
family circle at first; bu
a good understanding b
intruder. When her new
she would lay his great h
him he must love her; an
huge tongue in the urchi
young lady laugh, provide
a good humour.

The first time Montfort
especially good temper: a
had joined the party in
"Come! let us place 'the
designation of his for her, h
a young princess,) under Li's
perly solemn and becoming a
They then made Li lie down,
Highness to

up from slipping on the floor, and Montfort on the other.

"There, Li!" said he, "is our babe for you! Love her, and protect her as you did her mother; and we will love our Li better still, if that be possible."

Li soon obeyed the first part of the instructions so well, that he would stand for ever to have his ears pulled by her.

* * * * *

I hate a good mother! I mean, the woman who puts on a sad and care-worn countenance, gives up all idea of trying to please everybody in the world, (her husband, of course, included,) and thinks of nothing from morning till night but washing and dressing her children.

Let it not be thought that our Maria was one of such. This her feelings and tastes would as little admit of as her situation in life. Instead of allowing her to think, that in becoming the mother, she might forget she was the wife, they told her a far different story. If she loved her child as well

as ever mortal mother did love, she therefore loved its father better, and sought the more to please him by every means in her power, and to make his life pass delightfully. She was, in truth, more a lover now than ever she had been; and as soon as she had quite regained her strength, she used to ride, and walk, and run about with her husband, nearly as much as she did before. Nor did she find this interfere with the most anxious and tender care of her little one.

* * * * *

It may be supposed that their own extraordinary adventures and marriage had tinged the minds of Montfort and Maria with romance; but so little was this the fact, that they were both decidedly of opinion, if in marriage, we gain a companion for our hearts, our minds, and our tastes, it is a matter of small moment to happiness whether that companion comes to us through the land of wild and wonderful exploits, or walks up and knocks at the door in the most humdrum way possible—whether, "True knight or lady fair," prance along

on war-steed or palfry, or whether they step out of the stage-coach, honestly giving a shilling to the guard, and eighteen-pence to the driver:—by the way, in this respect, they would have the advantage of all Knights-Errant that I ever read of, who were none of them over and above particular about settling their bills—they did not think it made the slightest difference, whether cruel guardians force lovers to run away, or still more cruel parents provokingly give their full approbation and consent; but conceived those to stand the best chance of permanent happiness who were so fortunate as to fix their choice on such as, if they were not in love, they would have thought to be the most agreeable companions they had ever met with.

In their castle-building for their own young lady, their wishes never went beyond this point: nor would they willingly have consented to her suffering, even for a single hour, the misery they had endured, for all the romance in the world.

* * * * *

But notwithstanding Montfort and Maria's spirits

and gaiety, their minds were tinged by all they had suffered, and by the near approach and constant contemplation of death for such a length of time. It was, however, an autumn tinge, which, though solemn, added only beauty; and it was one they hoped never to lose. "Oh, my own!" would the young wife say, "Let us never forget it! The recollection of it will serve to keep us as prepared to die, as we humbly trust we then were. And will this make us less happy? Oh, no! but a thousand times more happy—for how shall we dare to enjoy life if we are not fit to leave it?" And then, when his arms were about her, and all her treasures near, (for, in spite of what she said she did not like to do so else,) she would read the wretched letters they had written to each other, to bring back and impress upon her mind the feelings of that terrible time.

But though both were determined never to forget, each became the remembrancer or the recollected on this subject, just according to the mood they happened to be in. To say the truth, Maria

was the former the oftener of the two, but she was not by any means always such. She one day said, in answer to some observation of Montfort's about their child, "But I can tell you what would have made you love her more still—if I had died in giving her life."

"Oh, Maria!" said Montfort, reproachfully, looking aghast at the very thoughts of such a thing.

To which she replied, "And is the lesson lately taught so thrown away already that we cannot bear to talk of death?"

Montfort answered deprecatingly, "But, Maria! if I do not like to think of the destruction of my new-found happiness, may it not be forgiven?"

"No, Charles! it may not be forgiven! And you must learn not to thus shrink from the idea, lest He who gave that lesson should see it necessary to read a more severe one still. And should we be afraid to reflect on what we know must come? You are not afraid to think of your own death, and must not, shall not, be afraid to think of mine or your child's."

Montfort took her hand beseechingly.

"No, my Charles! I must make no compromise here. You must not only always bear the truth in mind yourself, but you must do more—you must prevent my ever forgetting what I am now telling you."

And in the evening of the day on which this conversation had taken place, when her babe had been brought to Maria, after they had dined in their own family circle, her father taking a nap in his chair, and Li sound asleep on his mat, she stole over and sat upon Montfort's lap with "the thing" asleep in her own. The arm that was not about



picture was not now a true one. Maria would press Montfort's hand to her bosom, look at him—at her babe—at her father—at her dumb protector—and then lay her head down again upon his shoulder with a sigh of thankfulness.

At one moment Montfort's feelings led him to try to kiss the little sleeper without waking her; and Maria, who was rather fearful as to his succeeding in the attempt, had just put her hand upon his head in order to guide it gently to its object, when she was startled from her seat by hearing some one approach the door. In getting up hastily she awoke the young lady, who gave a squall; Li bounced from his mat, nearly oversetting a table; and the Emperor roused himself and shook his ears, but instantly opened his eyes very wide, pretending he had not been asleep at all, although he at the same time looked rather cross at being thus disturbed—in fact, their previous quiet was at once converted into a complete little uproar. Nevertheless, the intruder whose approach had caused this sensation, instead of

being received ungraciously, was greeted with a smile of delight from every face, (even that which had been beginning to look cross,) when he announced the return of Ernest and his young and blooming bride, from their wedding tour. And hardly had that announcement been made, when the female friends were fast locked in each other's arms; and the male, shaking hands as heartily as if the new arrivals had just escaped some terrible danger.

* * * * *

And now, Maria, fare thee well! That I have been beguiled of many a weary hour, I owe to thee! whether, when the cold and chilling world hung heavy on a sickened heart, or when I was in solitude far more than I would have been—in either case, cut off, for awhile, from those who alone make life worth the trouble of living.

Thou hast "flung forgetfulness around me," when to do so, was to do me almost the greatest earthly good:—not that I suppose my lot to have ever been peculiarly severe; but surely there are

[illegible] heard enough to make [illegible] common. Death [illegible]

But, "the greatest is behind." The noblest virtues still [illegible] peril—not from [illegible] breaking [illegible] neal goodness [illegible] begun—and I [illegible] myself at variance with [illegible] errors, has so much of [illegible] most tiny thread might [illegible] and, "weak [illegible] being hurried away [illegible] thoughts of [illegible] me to the shore [illegible] troubled waters, [illegible] upon me like the [illegible] power of virtue, turned [illegible] hazarded my destruction, [illegible] safety and of happiness. What can equal the misery of a heart, not naturally [illegible], that is, whether from real or fancied wrongs, [illegible]

against its kind? What should equal the gratitude of a heart that well knows by whom it was saved from this fate? and hearts there are, capable of feeling deep and lasting gratitude, which are likewise capable of erring fearfully when not restrained by such a tie.

Farewell, then, happy wife and happy mother, that, when my soul was parched and wrung, came like a beautiful antelope, playing out upon the desert, with thy little fawn gambolling beside thee, and discovered to me where lay the springs in which alone my safety could be found.

But Maria is to me a reality: I have mixed up her virtues and her amiabilities with those I have loved, and those I (oh, thank God!) do love, until I can scarcely distinguish between them; things so similar, it seems to me, refuse to be separated. That I have not exaggerated her goodness, witness the dead, and witness the living! I have, in truth, known resignation to the prospect of an early death, from which she even might have learnt a lesson, exhibited by one

who had no such length of time allowed her to prepare for the gloomy passage of the tomb—have known a seemingly more unnatural forgetfulness of self, in one full as young, and not less fitted to enjoy life and to bless it; and, oh! I have known her nobler qualities as well as her more engaging—above all, her generosity of heart!—excelled by the living.

If there be sterling gold in the image I have set up, the mines from which I drew the ore did not exist only in imagination. If there be beauty in that image, she in whose likeness I fashioned it is yet on earth.

END OF VOL. III.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page 88, line 1, *for* 'one that I brought up a puppy,' *read* 'one that I brought up of a puppy.'

Page 185, line 6, *for* 'permitted the means of doing,' *read* 'permitted to be the means of doing.'

VOL. II.

Page 111, line 5, *for* 'severe,' *read* 'severely.'

Page 267, line 6, *for* 'but I'll ask him to-morrow, certainly,' *read* 'but I'll certainly ask him to-morrow.'

Page 276, line 22, *for* 'to where the locks lay,' *read* 'to where the lock of her hair lay.'

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